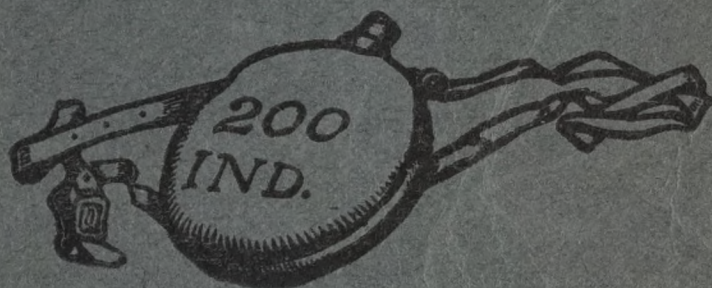


SI KLEGG:

SI, SHORTY AND THE BOYS ARE CAPTURED AT
KENESAW AND TAKEN TO ANDERSONVILLE

BY JOHN MCELROY



PZ 3, M 1544 57

BOOK No. 7

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, WASHINGTON, D. C.



WAR.

SI KLEGG

SI, SHORTY AND THE BOYS ARE CAPTURED AT
KENESAW AND TAKEN TO ANDERSONVILLE

BY JOHN MCELROY.



PUBLISHED BY
THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE COMPANY,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

PZ 3
M 1544
S
7

SECOND EDITION—ENLARGED AND REVISED.

COPYRIGHT 1916.

BY THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE COMPANY.

JUL -5 1916



\$ 0.50

©Cl.A431751

No. 1.

PREFACE.

“Si Klegg, of the 200th Ind., and Shorty, his Partner,” were born years ago in the brain of John McElroy, Editor of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE.

These sketches are the original ones published in THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, revised and enlarged somewhat by the author. How true they are to nature every veteran can abundantly testify from his own service. Really, only the name of the regiment was invented. There is no doubt that there were several men of the name of Josiah Klegg in the Union Army, and who did valiant service for the Government. They had experiences akin to, if not identical with, those narrated here, and substantially every man who faithfully and bravely carried a musket in defense of the best Government on earth had sometimes, if not often, experiences of which those of Si Klegg are a strong reminder.

THE PUBLISHERS.

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO THE RANK AND FILE
OF THE GRANDEST ARMY EVER MUSTERED FOR WAR.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.—Shorty Receives and Reads a Letter from Maria.....	13
CHAPTER II.—Pete and Sandy "Monkey" With a Percussion Shell.....	29
CHAPTER III.—Si and His Boys Take Part in a "Demonstration" and Wander Inside the Rebel Lines.....	40
CHAPTER IV.—The East Tennesseans Execute Vengeance on Their Prosecutors—Advancing the Line of Works.....	56
CHAPTER V.—A Mission of Vengeance by the East Tennesseans Leads to the Breaking of the Rebel Lines..	73
CHAPTER VI.—The Bloody Assault on Kenesaw Mountain—the 200th Ind.'s Bitter Struggle to Reach the Rebel Works—Fearful Losses—Si and Shorty Taken Prisoners.....	89
CHAPTER VII.—The First Day of Imprisonment And Its Bitter Experiences.....	106
CHAPTER VIII.—On the Train for Andersonville.....	119
CHAPTER IX.—They Reach Andersonville.....	137
CHAPTER X.—First Day in the Andersonville Stockade..	153
CHAPTER XI.—The Boys Get a Good Start for a "Tent"	168
CHAPTER XII.—Each Day Brings Fresh Experiences to the Boys.....	183
CHAPTER XIII.—The Boys Learn More of the Ways of Andersonville and Have An Encounter With Capt. Wirz.....	196

CHAPTER XIV.—Si and the Boys Get Out of the Scrape and Bring Their Bundles Inside.....	211
CHAPTER XV.—The Boys Make a Purchase of Some Hardtack.....	222
CHAPTER XVI.—The Boys Have Some Experience With Tunnels.....	238
CHAPTER XVII.—The Boys Begin Work on the Tunnel..	250
CHAPTER XVIII.—An Unexpected Mishap to the Tunnel	265

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
War.....	Frontispiece
It Was Raining.....	23
Basil Peters Coolly Wiped His Gun.....	59
"Use Your Bay'net".....	85
Crack! Went the Stones.....	117
"I'll Done Give This Hat o' Mine an' a Half Plug o' Ter- backer to Boot".....	121
"That's The Yankee Buryin' Ground," Wheezed Asth- matic Eph Perkins.....	143
Si Pleads for Little Pete.....	155
"He," Said Stivers, "is My Helper".....	177
"Keep the Thing," Said Shorty.....	191
With Shorty in the Lead, the Boys Encounter Capt. Wirz.....	207
Tibbetts Left Alone With the Prisoners.....	217
Si and Shorty Make a Purchase of Hardtack.....	235
The Guard Fired Instantly.....	249
"But See How Funny Hit Made My Hands Look".....	251
Si and Shorty Talk to Ike Deeble.....	255
"I Can See 'Em Gettin' Peakeder an' Peakeder Every Day".....	271

THIS IS NUMBER SEVEN
OF THE
SI KLEGG SERIES.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

In the preceding chapter, which closed the volume before this, Si and Shorty had gotten into a hot squabble with a martinet Lieutenant of the Regular Army. In the excitement at the close of the battle, they had treated him as cavalierly as men often did under the stress of circumstances. The Lieutenant had preferred charges against them and brought them before a Court-Martial. The Court was strongly inclined to the boys on account of their splendid record as soldiers, but had to impose discipline.

The Judge-Advocate had a double duty to perform by virtue of his office, where he represented both the Army and the defendants. He made strong speeches as to the enormity of the offense that had been committed, and then made extenuating pleas for men who had been such model soldiers. The Court listened with due attention to his arguments in favor of discipline, but giving much more weight to the record of the boys. Its findings imposed a strong reprimand upon Si and Shorty, being administered by their Lieutenant.

Little Pete, devoured by curiosity, had climbed into a tree where he could overhear everything, was detected, and the roaring, rough-spoken, but kind-hearted President of the Court had ordered him bucked and gagged.

SI KLEGG

CHAPTER I.

SHORTY RECEIVES AND READS A LETTER FROM MARIA.

THE COURT took a recess for dinner. The meal was a fine one. The headquarters foragers had been quite successful, the General felt that it was necessary to get as much enjoyment as possible out of their few days' rest, the cook rose to the occasion, and the guests brought appetites with them which had been sharpened by days of rough and hasty snacks of coffee and broiled pork. There was a young roast pig on the board, with greens, young onions, and new potatoes, and even butter for their biscuits, milk for their coffee, and rare old apple-jack on the side. Of course, good cigars were furnished by the sutler.

"One of the mysteries of this rebellion to me," said the Major, toying with a tumbler of the apple-jack, "is why a people who can brew such a liquor as this ever become rebels. I can understand why a man who drinks Illinois sod-corn whisky would naturally become a rebel, or anything else that was mean and

hateful. Indeed, it would be hard for him to be anything else with that stuff burning in his vitals. I've had to defend men charged with all sorts of crimes, from the gentlemanly offense of killing their opponents in political disputes up to the beastly vulgarity of beating their wives, and I've always told the jury that 'instigated by the devil and not having the fear of God before his eyes' in the indictment was the old English form for three fingers of sod-corn whisky in the defendant, and relied on their own experiences with it. Beer makes a man sullen and stupid, and anxious to be mean, but sod-corn makes a man feel as if he's just got a commission smelling brimstone to locate a Countyseat in sheol right in his own neighborhood. Now, this stuff predisposes a man to love and affection for all his fellow-creatures."

In this mood the Major led the rest back to court. On his way he passed by little Pete Skidmore, still bucked, and with a bayonet in his mouth. Pete turned up his eyes appealingly to him, for he was devoured with anxiety as to what this terrible, blustering man had done with Shorty. The Major flew into a passion at the sight.

"Here, who in thunder is punishing this boy this way, I'd like to know?" roared he. "What blim-blammed heartless brute put that bayonet in that child's mouth? He's only a child, and ought to be in school. Who knows about this? Speak, some of you. Where's that lunk-headed Provost-Sergeant? He ought to know about this. I'll make somebody smart for this cruelty when I find out who's responsible. Get me that Provost-Sergeant, I tell you. If he did this of his own notion, I'll snatch his stripes

off with my own hand. I'll not allow anything like that to go on around where I am. Where's that Provost-Sergeant?"

"Here comes the Sergeant now," said some of the men, and that official, alarmed by the roaring, came up at a double-quick.

"Here, Sergeant—you big, broad-shouldered, two-fisted stallion—did you buck-and-gag that child?"

"I was ordered to," gasped the Sergeant.

"You were ordered to, you unfeeling roustabout? And you didn't have the manhood to protest against it! Take that bayonet out of that child's mouth at once. Who ordered you to? I'll prefer charges against him this very day. I expect it was that West Point martinet. But I'll have no such doings around me. Who ordered you to?"

"You did," said the Sergeant. The men roared, and the officers could not conceal their smiles.

"I?" gasped the Major.

"Yes. This is the boy who was caught up in the tree listening to the court. You ordered me to take him out and buck-an-gag him till you decided what else you would do."

"That was your order, Major," said the other officers.

"Well, if I can't say the roughest things without meaning them," said the Major, contritely. "I'm afraid I'll never get over it. Sergeant, untie the boy. Well, he didn't tie you very tightly, sonny, that's one comfort," said he, examining Pete's wrists. "You know, my boy, it's an awful thing to spy on a court-martial. You're so little you don't know any better, but if you were a man no punishment would be too

severe. Let this be a lesson to you. Here's a dollar for you. Go back to your company, now, and be a good"——

"I don't want your money," sobbed little Pete. "I don't care a durn what you've done to me, or will do to me. I want to know if you're goin' to shoot Corp'l Elliott?"

"There, there, sonny," said the Major soothingly. "Don't ask questions. Run off to your company."

"But I won't go. I can't go," sobbed little Pete. "I can't live anywhere till I know whether you're goin' to shoot Corp'l Elliott."

The boy's distress was so evident and so poignant that the kind-hearted Major could not resist a little infraction of the secrecy of the court.

"Don't be so scared," he said. "Calm down. I hardly think we'll shoot Corporal Elliott. No, you can be sure we won't. But don't say anything about it just yet."

Pete's tears instantly ceased, and he streaked off for the company, half a mile away. The court heard him yelling, a hundred yards before he reached the company:

"Corp'l Elliott ain't to be shot! Corp'l Elliott ain't to be shot!"

The next day while Si and Shorty were still in arrest, awaiting the approval and promulgation of the judgment of the court, the Orderly-Sergeant handed Si a letter from Annabel, and Shorty a bulky one from Maria.

Both took the letters shamefacedly. Some how the missives seemed to bring the folks at home into

touch with their present situation, and it hurt awfully.

Si fingered his letter longingly for some time, and then could not withstand the temptation, and slipped off to one side and devoured it.

Shorty could not do this. Maria had not written him since the opening of the campaign, and never such a portentous looking message as this. His guilty conscience told him that in some way she had heard all about his fall from grace, and this letter was to inform him of it, administer the reproof that he deserved, and dismiss him from all friendship with the family and her. He would not open it while his fate was still pending, for it would seem to implicate her in his wrong-doing. He thrust it into his breast pocket, but kept his hand upon it, while bitter thoughts ran as to what she could, should, and probably did say.

"Well," he said desperately, "they'll probably send me to the Dry Tortugas, and that's as good an end as any, for what's the good of anything else, since I've lost all chance of her?"

"Where's Si and Shorty, Orderly?" said the voice of Lieut. Bowersox.

"Here we are, Lieutenant," Si answered, coming forward to where he had left Shorty. Both stood at "attention," and their faces set a little, but otherwise showed no sign of their tense anxiety as to the Lieutenant's message.

"Come off to one side, boys," said the Lieutenant kindly. "I want to talk to you. I've just come from headquarters, where I went to get the General to approve at once the court's decision, and so put

you boys out of your misery. The General was a little disposed to ride a high horse, and insisted that we should give you some sort of a dose, but I talked Stone River and Chickamauga to him, and said that you were badly needed in the company, and so he finally let up, on condition that I give you a skinning, and that you understand you have got to walk a mighty straight chalk in the future. It was a good deal of a strain on the court, but it has acquitted you on all the charges and specifications, and the General has approved the findings. But they all warn you not to do it again. Now think of all the severe things I could say to you, and imagine I have said them."

"I have already thought 'em all over, Lieutenant," said Shorty contritely.

"Well, the order will come down directly restoring you to duty. Don't say anything about it, or make any demonstrations. Let it all be forgotten as soon as possible. We are to move at once on Cassville, where the rebels are promising us that long-expected big fight of the season."

The weight lifted from Shorty was so great that he felt that he could not stand it to read Maria's letter. There was hope now that he might make a successful plea with her, since his own officers had acquitted him. He pulled the letter out, and looked longingly at it.

"Here, Si and Shorty, get a move on you," said the Orderly, bustling up. "You must make up for the time you've lost. The rebels have fallen back clear along their line, and we're to go after them on the jump. We wan't to catch 'em before they get

across the Etowah River. Si, take a squad and go over to the Commissary and draw our rations—three days', remember. Shorty, take another and go after ammunition. You'll find the wagon right over there. Hustle, now, for it's three days' cooked rations, and 100 rounds, and business right from the word go. You've been loafing long enough."

All the days that they had been resting on the banks of the Oostenaula River, the regiment had heard the noise of the heavy fighting far to the front, to the remote right and the distant left. They had seen the columns of men pushing forward, and had heard the stories of the wounded brought back, of the exploits and successes of the different regiments, and had chafed that they were having no share. Now their turn had come, and they were all excitement and eagerness as to what they were to do. Rations and cartridges were quickly issued, and everybody pushing forward the cooking of his rations, for they all knew that scant time would be allowed.

Before anybody was quite ready, the bugle blew, and there was a rush to drink the boiling coffee, or pour it into canteens, and the sizzling pork was crammed into haversacks, while blankets were hastily rolled and equipments donned.

"We'll halt somewhere soon, and then I'll git a chance to read her letter," said Shorty, feeling it, while he sipped his boiling coffee. "That girl's got a temper—the temper o' the family, undoubtedly—and she kin say things that just take the hair off. I expect she scalps me from the date-line to yours

truly. But, then, I'd rather be roasted by her than praised by any other girl that lives."

Again the bugle blew.

"Fall in, Co. Q! Fall in promptly!" shouted the Orderly.

"Forward! March!" sang the bugle, and the 200th Ind. started on a rush for the banks of the Etowah. The Orderly was entirely right in predicting that it would be "jump from the word go." At that time no grass ever grew under the feet of one of the regiments of Sherman's army, when it started on the march. Three years of swift, forceful, unresting marching, which would carry them across great States in a few days, had made them the finest marchers the world ever saw. When a regiment started it did not move as a crowd of men, but as some great, myriad-footed serpent, every portion of whose long body moved in exact unison with the same resistless energy and purpose toward its object. Nobody straggled, nobody fell out. No one seemed to think such a thing possible. Every one seemed only intent in pushing the great body of the regiment along after the Colonel's horse.

Such a march carried the 200th Ind. over the battlefield of Adairsville, still ghastly with the unburied dead and fresh destruction of the recent sanguinary fight. It stopped but a few minutes for coffee there, and none to scan the scene of the latest victory, for the muskets were rattling, and the cannon thumping away to the front, and there seemed more need for the regiment there than studying history that had already been made.

Shorty had merely time to take out Maria's letter

for another furtive look at the superscription and postmark, when the bugle summoned him to his place in the great serpent.

Miles were rushed over, with the sound of the firing becoming more distinct at every rise of the ground. The regiment halted in a piece of woods, from either side of which came a din of musketry and cannon shots. Nothing could be seen, however.

"Apparently we're up to our work," remarked Si to his squad. "Bring your cartridge-boxes to the front, boys, but keep cool, and listen for orders. Don't load till you git the command."

"Now, Pete," cautioned Shorty, "keep right behind me all the time. Stay right there every minute."

"But I can't see nothin' if I stand behind you," grumbled Pete. "Might as well try to look over a tree."

"Companies, left into line," called the soft, penetrating voice of the Colonel. "Right dress! Front! Load at will! Load!"

The regiment crashed through the brush and came out into the opening, in full view of a heavy line of works well filled with rebels and guarded in front with the usual infernal abatis.

"Lord save us!" groaned Si; "there it is again. Brace up, boys. The sooner we're through it the sooner it'll be over. All together, when the word comes."

But as he spoke the rebels could be seen hurriedly leaving, impelled thereto by successful attacks made on their line far-off to the right and left.

"See the butternut slobs skedaddle," yelled Shorty as the regiment fired a volley to accelerate the

enemy's retreat, and indicate its own participation in the battle. "The sight of the 200th Injianny was too much for 'em. They kin stand everybody else but us." "Now," he added to himself, "we'll march inside and go into camp. That'll be a good place to read Maria's letter. I'd ruther've gone through that abatis than took the scoldin' she'll give me, but since I escaped the abatis, I ought to take the other."

But the business the army had on hand was too pressing to admit of the regiment's loitering in the works any more than on the battlefield of Adairsville. It did not enter them at all, but the moment it was seen that the rebels were really gone, it was turned by the right flank into a road and urged forward to get on the flanks of the retreating rebels before they could secure refuge behind another line of intrenchments. Nor did darkness stop it. It was pushed relentlessly on, until by 10 o'clock the men were almost dropping with fatigue, and a halt was necessary.

A drenching rain set in, and Shorty was so tired that after he had fixed up a shelter for himself and Pete there was no chance to do any reading, so he crawled in and went to sleep. He would get up early the next morning, take Maria's scoring in the early daylight, before the rest were up, and meditate on it during the day.

It was raining still worse the next morning, when at the earliest hint of dawn the tired boys were roused with no little difficulty, and after a very scant few minutes allowed for breakfast were started on a rush for the Etowah River to capture and save a bridge over which the rebels were retreating.

Shorty had little time to think of Maria in that long, wearisome day of long-ranging, skirmishing through the soaking rain, of pushing through the drenched brush and the dripping woods, over the



IT WAS RAINING.

spongy weeds in the fields, and wading through muddy streams, sometimes only ankle deep and sometimes up to his waist, with the rebels popping away from most unexpected coignes and coverts.

Night was falling as they reached the bridge. There was a sharp sputter of musketry and a rush

of Co. Q, and the bridge was gained, with a few scratches to pass for wounds.

The regiment marched over the bridge, and halted on a little hill just beyond.

"Well, I hope we're goin' to halt here for the night, for I'm dead tired, and I know the other boys, poor fellows, are worse off than I am," said Si, rubbing off his brogans on the wet grass the heavy load of Georgia clay he had gathered in their rush up the road. I think we've done enough for one day."

"I think so, too," muttered Shorty, feeling in his pocket for Maria's letter.

"Forever blast the blamed luck," grumbled the Orderly-Sergeant, coming up. "We've got to skin back the way we came just as fast as we can go. Rebel cavalry are after a train out there somewhere, and we've got to save it. Did anybody ever see such rotten luck? Pick up your things and fall in, every one of you, at once."

"Gosh all Christmas," howled Shorty, "what do they mean by sich blim-blammed foolishness? How kin we chase cavalry, when we're too worn out to ketch a healthy snail, if it was goin' away from us? That's just the way we're always imposed on. If there's anything rough we're the ones picked out for it, while other rijimints kin go into camp, and"——

"Stop that at once, Corp'l Elliott," said the Orderly, his official position asserting itself, as usual, when anybody else assumed to grumble. "That's no way for a non-commissioned officer to talk before the men. We're ordered to go, because we'd halted here, expecting to go into camp, and the rest marched on.

We're the nearest, and it's our place to go. The order's hard, but perfectly proper, sir. There goes the bugle. Forward, now!"

It was a four-mile rush backward through the rain and mud and darkness, before they at last found the train, which was plodding its way onward toward the river. It had seen rebel cavalry in the distance, in the course of the afternoon, and sent up a call for assistance, but that was hours ago, and the cavalry had disappeared almost as long ago.

"Will we go into camp here, sir?" the Orderly asked of Capt. McGillicuddy, after the news had been thoroughly digested and every man had taken his fill of swearing at the stupidity of their forced march.

"No," answered the Captain; "we must go back over the bridge to where we were, so as to be ready to take our place in the line in the morning. We shall have to help in taking some works beyond the river early tomorrow, and must be in reaching distance when wanted."

There was a general groan, which the Orderly did not attempt to repress. The march seemed incomparably longer than all the distances gone during the day, and when the other side of the river was reached after midnight, everybody was too tired to more than roll himself in his blanket and lie down where the ranks broke, without attempting to make any shelter from the persistent rain.

As usual, it seemed to them they had scarcely lain down when the Orderly-Sergeant roused them up at dawn with:

"Get up at once, and make your coffee as quick as you can. We've got to go over and occupy the

works which the 1st Oshkosh's going to move out of. They're right under fire, and you won't get a chance to make any coffee during the day, probably."

What was the use of grumbling? Things had passed that stage. Even little Pete felt that he would just as soon die there, and be done with it, and the bullets singing over the works as they came up the slope did not excite them in the least.

"Halt," commanded the Colonel, while they were still under the cover of the hill. He was a provident, calculating commander, and did not propose to lose any men that he could help. "Now, men, the works we're to occupy are right in front. The rebels are looking for us. Every man stoop down and make a rush as quick as he can for the cover of the works. Break ranks! March!"

So they managed to get through, without loss, the storm of bullets which the rebels were sending over from a couple hundred yards away.

The ditch behind the works was nearly full of water, which the former occupants had worked into a thin mud. But they plunged into this without hesitation, and were instantly covered with a batter of Georgia red clay. For a few minutes they loaded and fired as fast as they could, "to inform them whelps over there that they'd got a different crowd to deal with than them badgers from Wisconsin," as Si remarked.

Presently the firing died down to fitful sharpshooting when either side saw something exposed to shoot at. This went on some hours, when the Colonel called down the line to Capt. McGillicuddy:

"Captain, I think a dose of hot coffee would be a

good thing to keep us from catching cold in this mud-bath. Send a non-commissioned officer and a couple of men back to round up the cooks and teamsters, and have them make us some kettles of coffee and bring up."

"Corp'l Elliott," commanded Capt. McGillicuddy, "you hear what the Colonel says. Take a couple of men and do it."

"Come on, Pete and Sandy," said Shorty, crawling up on the bank, an' starting for the rear on all fours. "Keep on your hands an' knees. Don't raise your head an inch, unless you think an ounce o' rebel lead would improve it."

Shorty speedily had all the hangers-on in the rear at work making coffee, and as he saw the fires blazing around the black kettles, he moved off behind a clump of bushes, put his hand into his muddy, soaked clothes, and pulled out the damp clump which was Maria's letter, opened it as tenderly and reverently as he could command his stubborn fingers, spread the blurred sheets out on his knee, and with much difficulty read:

"My Dear William: The last letter I got from you was writ when youde got orders to march the next morning, and open the grate campane. I can not tell you how anxious Ive bin ever since for news of you and Si. Ive prayed for you morning and night, and many times during the day Ive stopt in the middle of my work, to ask God to take care of you. Ive never felt such a deep, almost sickening anxiety in the war as now. Perhaps it was because I was young and giddy, and did not realize what the war meant. But Ive thought over all that you and Si

have bin through, and when I think of you about to go through the same things again, my heart sinks with fear. Will God be as good to you as He has bin? O, will He? That's what I ask myself every hour in the day. I think over things that I said and done when you was here, and blame myself for not treatin' you half well enough, and if I should never see you again, it wood be treatin' me right, and Ide never forgive myself as long as I lived. Ime talking to you now as I never thought Ide talk to you in the world, but this is a very solum moment, when one should talk sincerely, as in the presence of Eternity. Don't remember any pernicketty things about me, but believe that you haint got a truer friend in all the world than I am and ever will be. Do take care of your self for my sake, if not your own, and write me when ever you can get a chance.

Your true friend,

MARIA KLEGG.

Shorty could hardly believe his eyes, or hold his heart down, as he slowly spelled out the blurred letters, and still slower comprehended their meaning. He sat for a moment looking out over the scarred hills, without seeing breastwork or fort, or bastion or abatis. He was trying to understand the letter.

"Take care of myself for her sake," he murmured; "what kin she mean?"

"The coffee's biling, now, Corporal," said little Pete. "I expect we'd better hurry up with it. The boys are awful anxious for it."

"That's so," said Shorty, rousing himself, and taking a kettle in each hand. "Be keerful, Pete and Sandy, and scrouch down as low as you kin, when we raise the bank. Come on, now."

CHAPTER II.

PETE AND SANDY "MONKEY" WITH A PERCUSSION SHELL.

REANIMATED by the hot, strong coffee, the regiment resumed its work of watching the opposite intrenchments with renewed zeal, and the rebels could not so much as protrude a gun-barrel through the slit between the top of the works and the head-log without getting several shots from the eager watchers in our lines.

The rebels were repressed, but still vigilant, as Pete Skidmore found out to his alarm. In spite of Shorty's anxious cautionings Pete would persist in rising up to "peek" over the head-log, and expose himself in other ways. Unwittingly he got his head considerably above the log, and discovered this fact when he was knocked back into the ditch, making a great splash as he fell. The blood streamed from his forehead. Shorty, with an exclamation of dismay, crawled toward him, but before he could reach him, Pete, to his great relief, raised up a little, and passed his hand wonderingly along the red track of the bullet through his hair. Seeing the nature of the injury, the concern of the rest of the company found relief in a laugh at Pete's dazed look.

"Scratched your thinkery, did it?" growled Shorty.

"Reached for the nest where you hatch your spellin' lessons and do your sums? If your head 'd bin half-an-inch higher your name'd bin Mud. Mebbe you'll mind what I say after this, you restless, squirmin' little maggot."

"Crawl back to the rear, Skidmore," said Capt. McGillicuddy, "and let the Surgeon look to your hurt."

"Please, can't I stay, Captain?" pleaded Pete. "It ain't hurtin' me much now, and the blood's stopped runnin'."

"No; skip out, Pete," commanded Shorty. "I'm worried to death all the time you're here, an' I can't tend to my own business properly from thinkin' about you. I lost one good fair shot at a feller's head, just because you distracted me by pokin' your head above the log. My not downin' that feller may cost some of us our lives, for I'm sure he's the one that's bin doin' some mighty sharp work."

"Please let me stay," begged Pete. "I can't see nothin' back there."

"Say," called out a voice from the other side, "who'd I fetch that time? Did I kill a Jigadier-Brindle?"

"Naah," Shorty yelled back. "You didn't kill nobody. You only creased a little boy."

"Yo'uns 's lyin' straight," returned the voice from the rebel lines. "Yo'uns 's makin' too much pow-wow fur that. I must've at least killed a Kunnel. I ain't wastin' no lead creasin' boys. I'm layin' for big game, I am."

"You are, you clay-eatin' disciple o' Jeff Davis," Si yelled back. "Well, you hain't hit nobody to hurt

this whole mornin'—not even a brevet Corporal. You're too afeared o' showin' your plaguey carkiss, to git a good aim."

"That's it, go on tauntin' him, Si," whispered Shorty, who had an idea. "Devil him into showin' a little o' hissself. Pete, git your gun loaded, an' lay for him. He's right there by that splintered stub on the head-log. See it? Draw down fine on the crack below it. Keep cool, now, and don't shoot till you git a fine sight. Le'me look along your sights. There, a little more to the left. Hold her steady there, an' wait. Go ahead, Si."

"What's the matter with you fellers?" Si called out. "You can't shoot alongside of us any day in the week. Did the lickin's we give you back at Dalton and Resaca shake your nerves? I'll bet I kin stick my hat up an' you can't hit it. We must've downed a dozen of you fellers today, an' all that you've done is to scratch one of us, an' he a little boy. Fine set o' shots you are."

"What's that you say? What's that you say?" roared the rebel. "I kin outshoot any man yo'uns 've got over thar. Yo'uns dassent show a button over yer head-log, but I'll knock hit off. I'll knock off the pint o' your ramrod four times outen five if yo'uns 'll stick hit up."

"I'll bet you three days' rations o' coffee you can't hit the butt of a musket stuck up sideways," said Si, in a tantalizing tone. "An' I'll give you three tries at it."

"I'll take you. I'll bet you a canteen o' applejack agin your coffee. Stick up yer gun."

"All of you lay low—lay mighty close," warned

Shorty, in a stage-whisper. "Now, Pete, look sharp. When you git a dead bead on that streak o' light just under the stub, aim a full inch under the bottom o' the log. Wait just a thought after you see that streak o' light darkened, an' then pull the trigger. You'll ketch him somewhere about the head, and settle him. Stick up your gun, Si."

"Hand me that rebel gun there," whispered Si. "Ain't goin' to run no risk o' havin' my own spiled."

He raised the gun-butt, holding it loosely, so that he wouldn't be hurt if it was knocked out of his hand.

Almost instantly a shot came from the rebel side, and grazed the iron band on the musket-butt. Almost simultaneously Pete fired, and his shot was echoed by a screech from the rebel side.

"No fair! Foul! Foul! Dirty Yankee trick, you blue-bellied scoundrels!" yelled the rebels, opening a venomous fusilade on the works, to which Co. Q responded with interest.

"Say, I s'pose I'll have to pay the bet, though you didn't actually win," Si called over, after the firing had died down. "You didn't hit the butt fair, only scraped it, but as I said hit, I'll stand by it. I'll throw the coffee over the works."

"And then shoot the man that tries to git hit," yelled the rebels back. "You blasted varmits, jest show yer heads above yer banks, and we'uns 'll blow 'em off."

"Thankee for the invite," said Si. "After you's manners. Stick up your own heads first."

"Pete, you ketched him somewhere about the jaw," Shorty congratulated that palpitating youth, "an'

got full pay for that scratch on your head. You done yourself proud."

The firing became merely an occasional shot, and many of the men crawled out of the ditch, and threw themselves down on the ground behind for a rest of their tense nerves.

Si and Shorty remained on watch, and also Pete Skidmore, who was so inflated with his recent achievement that he wanted to duplicate it.

"Hist," said he, after a period of breathless waiting, "there's a hat bobbin' up."

Si's eyes had already caught sight of it.

"You hit it," said Pete gleefully, as Si's rifle cracked. "I saw the pieces fly. But there it comes up again."

Shorty fired this time.

"You've hit it, too," cried Pete, "on the side, and tore a hole out."

"I think Jeff Davis has lost one vote in the convention for sure," said Shorty grimly, as he reloaded. "An' there's one less clay-eatin' snipe to bother us in future. I got a center-shot on him."

"But there it comes up again," said Pete. "Let me shoot."

"Bang away, youngster," said Shorty. "That feller'll be as full o' holes as a skimmer presently."

"Why, there it comes up agin," gasped Pete, as he peered eagerly through the smoke to note the effects of his shot. "I hit it, and it went down, and then bobbed up agin."

The whole crowd was now squinting through under the log at the baffling hat.

"I begin to smell a rat," said Si, who now remem-

bered that they had not been receiving any return shots for some time. He put his hat on the muzzle of his gun and slowly raised it above the head-log. Shorty did the same.

Not a single shot, though the whole crowns were exposed, giving the fairest kind of marks.

Si then raised himself up without drawing fire, and then sprang on top of the bank.

"Cap," he yelled, after a quick look, "they've got a sneak on us. They're all gone."

The regiment rose as one man, leaped the works, rushed across to the rebel intrenchments and over them. Only a few dead men were found of their swarm of enemies. In front of Si's position was a cunning contrivance. A twig of hickory thrust in the ground bore an old wool hat. To the twig a dog was attached by a string so cleverly arranged that when the dog pulled to get free he would raise the hat above the head-log.

"Say, Yanks, what d' yo-uns think o' that 'ere fur a Yankee trick?" yelled a voice from a safe covert behind an oak on a knoll at a little distance. "Wasn't that a slick one? Why didn't yo'uns keep on pluggin' away at that old hat the rest o' the day? I hope you didn't hurt the dorg. He's a mean, wuthless yaller purp, but he's got more principle an' better blood an's more of a man than any o' yo'uns. So long. We'll see yo'uns down at Allatoony."

The speaker fired his gun as a parting salute, and disappeared in the brush.

Disappointed in not having been able to force his enemy into decisive battle along the Etowah River, Gen. Sherman halted his army for a few days before

launching it against the rugged steeps and formidable intrenchments of the Allatoona Mountains. The 200th Ind. was pushed forward until it came within uncomfortable shelling distance of a rebel fort, and there threw up a line of intrenchments, and waited developments. The shelling was at first exciting, but in a little while everybody got used to it, and settled down to his usual vocations without paying particular attention to the firing, except when some specially well-aimed shell made a flurry.

After they had washed out of their clothes the clay which had accumulated while they were wallowing in the flooded rifle pits, and doing some rude mending, Si's and Shorty's next thoughts were as to writing responses to the letters they had received. Si had reached the point where he announced his purpose of wanting to write to his "girl," with open frankness, for the boy who did not have a "girl" to write to was an exception, and considered as not in the swim at all. But Maria was entirely too sacred a subject for Shorty to expose to the garish light of day and the comments of the rude members of Co. Q. So closely had he kept his dear secret that he had not even intimated to Si that he had received a letter from his sister, much less any hint of the new happiness that glowed in his heart and softened his words and ways to all around him. Si occasionally marveled inwardly at the exceptional consideration and regard which Shorty displayed toward him and Pete, and for the want of anything better attributed it to the effect upon his brain of the blow he had received at Chickamauga.

Shorty was more eager than ever to write to

Maria, and more than ever at a loss what to say to her. He wanted to say everything, and yet he feared to say anything, lest he might wreck the delicate fabric of his happiness.

Upon examining his writing materials he found them in a deplorable condition. The rain had reduced his paper and envelopes to limp pulp, which no drying could cure. Inquiry among the other boys revealed that all theirs was in the same condition, and the sutler's wagon was miles away, no one knew where. But, as usual, obstacles only made Shorty more determined, and he finally succeeded in getting a couple of blank requisitions from the Quartermaster—the only decent paper that he could find. With these, a piece of board to serve as a desk, his gold pen and wooden inkstand, he repaired to the shelter of a large sycamore on the bank of Pumpkin Vine Creek, seated himself comfortably, and drew out Maria's letter and read it for the hundredth time. He began his laborious reply, but had only finished writing:

“In Camp at Punkin Vine Creek, May the 31.

“Mi Deer”——

He paused with a flush of guilt. Would he dare the presumption of writing “Maria,” without putting the “Miss” before it? How he longed to ask some one in whom he had confidence—Capt. McGillicuddy or Lieut. Bowersox, for example, what to do? But he would not lay bare his secret even to those cherished advisers. But, then, she had written him, “Mi deer Daniel,” and there would be something ineffably sweet in addressing her the same way. He did it with fingers so nervous that his writing was

so unsatisfactory that the sheet was spoiled. Yet he tore off the strip containing the words, carefully folded it, and placed it among his other treasures.

He re-wrote the opening lines more carefully, and gazed at them with satisfaction. Little Pete came running up with a six-pound unexploded shell in his hands.

"O, Corporal," he said, "I've bin lookin' all around for you. Here's a shot that just come over from a new battery the rebs have opened. Me and Sandy have been disputin' about it. He says it's a bum-shell. I say it's only a big iron minie bullet, same kind of a thing as we shoot, only made of iron, and intended to bust trees and breast works."

"That's a shell—a percussion shell, from a rifled gun," answered Shorty, abstractedly, looking up from his sheet. "The same as some of our guns shoot. Probably come from one o' our guns they've captured. Be mighty careful of it. Better go and throw it in the crick."

He resumed his writing:

"I taik mi pen in hand to inform you that we air down in the Altoony Mountains. This is a mighty pleasant country, or would be if there was no rebels, no forts, no abattee, no confounded mule trains, decent rodes, and it diddent rane 10 days every weke. Weve had sum purty stiff fitin, an have licked the rebs every time, but havn't ketched 'em good an' hard as we hoap to. But we'll bring 'em up with a round turn sune, an brake ole Johnson's blamed secesh nek."

Pete broke in again:

"You say this is a shell. Where's there any

touch-hole to make it go off? Me and Sandy's bin lookin' it all over, and we can't find none, same as the other bum-shells have. If it's a bum-shell why didn't it bust? And see how heavy it is. It must be solid."

"It is a shell, I tell you," said Shorty, looking up again. "A percussion shell. There's a cap on the end that makes it go off. It didn't strike right, and so didn't bust. Be mighty careful of it, or you may knock it off and blow you all to flinders. Throw it in the crick."

Shorty resumed his writing.

"I was glad to git yore deer letter. It made me happier than I kin tell you, to feel that you are really my friend, and wil always be so. Ide rather have yore friendship than all the worlds beside, for I think more of you than all the rest of the world put together. I've thot of yore letter every minnit when I've bin awake, and no mater what else was happenin'. It made me willin' to do anything an stand anything for your sake. Oh, sich a grand, bewtiful girl as you are"——

Pete came back:

"You say that there's a cap on this bum-shell? I can't see nothin' that looks like a cap, and me and Sandy have looked it all over."

"There's the cap," said Shorty, pointing out the plunger in the point. "When that strikes anything hard it busts a cap in the inside, an' busts the shell. Now, I tell you again to handle it mighty careful an' go and throw it in the crick after you're through looking at it."

He resumed:

"Ide go through fire and water, an to the ends of the earth. You are worth it. You are worth all that the best man alive kin"——

A shell burst near with such a terrific crash that Shorty sprang to his feet, and put the trunk of the tree between him and the rebel line. The whole regiment rushed to arms. Shorty glanced around, and saw Pete and Sandy standing aghast, and surveying the ruins of a stump, and limbs falling from the trees.

"Here, you imps o' Satan," yelled Shorty, "you've gone an' busted that shell, have you? Either o' you hurt?"

"Why," whimpered Pete, "me and Sandy kep' on argyin' about that shell. Sandy thought it'd go off, and I didn't. We finally laid it on that stump, and began to throw rocks at it to see if we could hit the cap. I didn't think Sandy could hit it,—he throws rocks just like a girl, you know,—and he was dead sure I couldn't hit it. I didn't think it would go off, anyway. 'Deed I didn't. I'm awful sorry."

"If I'm ever father to another boy"—Shorty began to commune with himself, as he sat down and resumed his letter.

CHAPTER III.

SI AND HIS BOYS TAKE PART IN A "DEMONSTRATION,"
AND WANDER INSIDE THE REBEL LINES.

GEN. SHERMAN politely declined to smash up his army against the heavy forts and intrenchments with which Joe Johnston had hospitably covered the front of the Allatoona Mountains, to entertain the "Yankees" and prevent any farther advance along the railroad.

It is true that Gen. Sherman did not immediately inform Joe Johnston that he had no intention of doing as Johnston wanted him. This want of frankness and sincerity as to intentions is a common fault with commanders, and is the source of much grief to old "Aunties" who think everything about war "real horrid."

Rather, Gen. Sherman made every effort to impress Joe Johnston with the belief that the immense amount of labor expended upon embankments and ditches—in hauling up guns and placing them, in covering his front with a thorny hedge of fallen trees, had not been wasted, but would do splendid service in repelling the assaults of the "swarming Yankee hordes." Every day Sherman pushed forward heavy threatening lines, toward the bristling fortifications of the enemy, with much angry cannon-

ade, much spiteful rage of musketry, much show of massing and marching men, many vicious little squabbles between Yankee skirmishers, and rebel outposts.

"The Wahoo Brigade," to which the 200th Ind. belonged, had a prominent share in these "demonstrations," with which Sherman's men became so familiar in the course of the Atlanta campaign.

It cleared out all the rebels from the wood in which it was camped, and pushed its skirmishers to the edge of the timber, from which they kept up a noisy, long-range bickering with the rebel skirmishers, dodging around among the sparse growth of pine and cedar, and the rocks on the long slope which led up to the crest of the hill. There all the timber had been cut down into abatis, and above this rose a high thick bank of red clay, which, to the right and left swelled into bastioned forts. On the higher mountains behind could be seen still heavier forts, with larger guns, that commanded the works in front.

Si and Shorty, with their squad, had been with the rest of Co. Q on the brigade skirmish-line all morning, and for awhile had thrown their whole souls into efforts to bring down the rebels dodging from one shelter to another. But, as they did not seem to be doing execution proportionate to the ammunition expended, they had let their firing die down to desultory shots when some daring rebel should offer the chance for a good long-range shot.

With loaded rifle ready, Si leaned up against an oak sapling, and attentively studied the ground in front, and the works, with a view to the assault that was probable. Shorty leaned against another, and

thought of Maria and her letter. Occasionally he would admonish Pete and Sandy about being too reckless in exposing themselves. Harry Joslyn and Monty Scruggs imitated their example, while Gid Mackall satisfied his ever-raging hunger from his haversack, and Alf Russell took the opportunity to again view the cicatrice across his cheek, by the aid of his pocket looking-glass, to determine how much of a permanent scar it was likely to leave.

"Orderly," commanded Capt. McGillicuddy, "send back for a couple boxes of cartridges, and give them out. Then tell the men as soon as they get them, to begin shooting, and keep it up as lively as they can. Let them shoot at anything or nothing, but shoot as fast as they can. We've got to make a big demonstration."

In a few minutes a most terrific uproar broke out along the whole line, with everybody banging away as fast as he could load and fire.

The rebels revived their firing, and the fort joined in. The din was accentuated by batteries to the right and left reopening fire on the rebel forts.

By the time the musket-barrels were getting too hot for handling, the bugle sounded "Forward," and the skirmish-line dashed out into the opening, and half-way across. Immediately behind came the brigade in line-of-battle. The front rank pushed forward into the skirmish-line, and reinforced its fire with their fresh guns, while the rear rank, carrying picks, axes and shovels, fell to work constructing a line of rifle-pits close behind the firing-line.

Everything was done with feverish energy, and in an incredibly short time logs, stones, chunks and

dirt were massed together in a rude embankment, high and thick enough to protect men lying behind from direct musket-shots from the rebels in the works.

Then, while the rear rank got ready to fire, the front line quickly sprang back, and lay down behind the shelter, and a volley blazed out from those who had been handling picks and shovels.

But before the front rank fell back they saw long lines of rebels coming from the hills to reinforce those in their front.

"Did you see all those men swarming down, Corporal?" asked Monty Scruggs, with staring eyes and drawn face, as they adjusted themselves behind the hasty intrenchment, and began throwing over whatever they could find to strengthen it. "The whole Southern Confederacy seems out for noon over there."

"Yes," answered Si, and he and Shorty brought up a log from the rear and laid it on the top of the bank. "Shorty, as near as I can guess, there must be a full division out there. Possibly two."

"It's two divisions, more likely," answered Shorty, picking up an ax to drive some stakes to hold the log in place. "But the more the better. When they're there they ain't somewhere else, and we want 'em out there just now. Gid, you and Alf take these axes and run back there to them young oaks and cut down two braces to put behind this log. Them battery fellers in the fort are goin' to see this log, and try to knock it off. Jump, now."

The boys soon came back with two stout beams, and they were none too quick, for the rebel artillery-

men, doubtless attracted by the group gathered around the log, fixing it, began sending shells in that direction. The first burst far behind the line, and did no damage, except to a bunch of saplings. The next struck a few rods in front, and sent its pieces screeching over the line.

"Lay low, boys! Lay low!" warned Shorty. "That yaller-bellied skeezicks at that left-hand gun is gittin' our range. He'll sock the next one right into us."

The third shell struck squarely in front of the log, clipped a piece out, and sent a cloud of dirt and stones whirling over those crouching behind.

"Good, fair shot, Mr. Yaller-belly," said Shorty, picking up a shovel, and throwing the dirt back over the bank. "But you can't do that agin for the drinks. That's all right, boys. That's his best lick. He can't do that agin in a hundred tries."

To show his confidence in his own words, and hearten up the startled boys, Shorty jumped over the works with his shovel, and began throwing the dirt back into the rent that pieces of the shell had made.

The night began to fall, made still darker by the heavy clouds of an impending rain.

"Are we to be waked up at daylight tomorrow morning to charge through that abatis, and fight all the men we saw?" asked Alf Russell, with a dreary shiver.

"No, Alf, I think not," answered Si consolingly. "It's my private opinion publicly expressed that we're just about as near them abattee as we're goin'. This is another Buzzard Roost game over again. All make-believe. When I took them prisoners back to the river this morning the whole country over to the

south and west was full o' men and wagons, all striking off in that direction. The men had three days' rations in their haversacks an' the ration an' ammunition wagons was right close along with each brigade. The whole army is makin' a big left wheel, just as they did at Snake Crick Gap, to ketch old Johnston somewhere where he ain't expectin' us. We're just givin' him a big play to amuse him, an' keep the time from hangin' heavy on his hands, while the boys are gettin' on his flank."

"Something o' that kind is surely up," corroborated Shorty. "I've felt it in my bones for two or three days. There's bin entirely too much noise an' blow, an' too little real hard knockin' for anything serious. When I went back after cartridges I saw there wasn't a soul behind us. All the wagons was gone but the one with the ammunition, an' it started as soon as they got through issuing. I'm goin' to eat something and then lay down. You kin wake me if I'm needed. Come over here, Pete."

"But, Sergeant," queried Monty Scruggs, "mayn't those fellows over there come out and literally eat us up? There's enough of them for that."

"That's more likely," answered Si. "But hardly, either. The way we come out o' those woods at 'em makes 'em believe that there's just lots more where we come from, and they're not likely to jump us until they've inquired around where our friends are. This will take 'em nearly all night. Their spies are probably now working in through our lines, an' if we're here we may expect a visit from 'em about daybreak. But unless all signs fail we won't be here. We're the last roses of Summer in this neighborhood.

Everybody else is skinnin' out for Stilesboro, Burnt Hickory and Dallas, an' guess we'll follow suit before many hours."

By that time every veteran in Sherman's army had become a General, so far as reading with unfailing skill the meaning of movements and signs around him.

From the hill came unmistakable sounds of the movements of troops. They could be seen passing in front of fires, and there was a rumble of wheels of artillery. It looked as if they were massing for an attack, and this was strengthened by their cannon opening spasmodically at times, as if to herald a charge.

"Shouldn't wonder if they're tryin' a big game o' bluff, too," Si shrewdly remarked, as he led the boys back a little ways to the shelter of a rock and some cedars, where they built a fire, and boiled some coffee, to wash down the pork they had fried in the morning before going on the skirmish line, and their hardtack. Shorty was waked up to give him a cup of coffee, and then Si, breaking a bunch of cedar to serve as a pillow, spread his blanket down, laid his gun, cartridge-box, and haversack where he could put his hand on them the moment he was aroused, and lay down. Composed by his example, the boys, weary with the excitement and fatigues of the long day, imitated him, and all, even the restless little Pete Skidmore, were soon as sound asleep as if in their beds at home, and not a rebel within 100 miles. And they slept on, though a heavy rain came on, and spattered them with red mud from the ditch they had dug.

About midnight the Orderly Sergeant aroused Si.

"Get up," he said, "and get your boys up. Don't make a particle of noise. Be still as cats. We're pulling out. The pickets 've come in, and the rest o' the brigade started. You take your squad and act as rear guard. Keep just in hearing of the regiment, and keep your eye peeled every minute."

It was still raining with a dash, but this helped to drown the noise of their movement from the eager watchers on the hill in front.

Si aroused the others, helped them roll and adjust their wet blankets, carefully counted them, and gathered them around him, and followed the rear of the regiment as it made its way back through the woods.

On the hill beyond the fires were smoldering, but figures could be seen passing them, showing that the rebels were still there.

Then followed a weary tramping through the blinding rain, and over roads that had been worked into the consistence of mortar by the men and teams that had gone ahead. Si had to keep within hearing of the regiment, and yet watch sharply for any signs of their being followed. For awhile he had no difficulty in keeping track of the regiment by the badness of the trail it left, and the noise of the weary, sleepy men plunging into mudholes, stumbling over stones, and grumbling and swearing as they went. But some noises in the rear attracted his attention, and he halted his squad to investigate.

When he started on again the regiment was out of hearing. He pushed ahead as rapidly as he could, but did not seem to be gaining on it.

At length the road left the muddy, low ground, and went up over a hard, sandy rise, and there forked. The dashing rain had washed out all signs of passers, and Si halted in dismay. Finally he decided that the left-hand road fork was the more direct route, and the regiment had probably gone on that, and he pushed forward with renewed speed.

Presently they were encouraged by hearing voices ahead, and pushed up until these were tolerably plain, when they jogged along after them.

Soon Shorty stepped up alongside of Si and whispered:

"Si, I wonder if them's our men. The voices don't seem familiar. They don't swear like the 200th Injianny does. Listen for yourself."

Si's heart went into his mouth, and he halted the squad in a whisper.

They all listened with painful intentness. The rain had temporarily ceased, and the only sounds were those of the water dripping on the leaves and rushing through the gullies. A roaring voice flowed back through the darkness.

"What is the matter with you slab-sided, splay-footed sand-diggers? Can't yo'uns see nothin', you mole-eyed bats? That mud-hole's big as a Georgy cracker's farm, and yit every 'moon-blind, wuthless hound o' yo'uns must tumble into hit, and waller thar. Climb outen thar this minnit, you white-eyed boars, afore I come thar and lather the empty bass-wood heads offen yo'uns with my sword. Lord, what was I ever set to command sich a gang o' addlepatated woods swine for? Hit's enough to drive a sensible man plum ravin' crazy. Git outen thar, I say."

"Shorty," whispered Si, "them's rebels. Nobody in our brigade's got sich a tongue as that."

"You're mighty right, Si. Don't you know that voice? That's Gilmartin's Tennessee regiment. Don't you remember we heard him bellerin' just that way at Stone River; agin at Lame Deer Crick, an' then at Duck River? We've got inside the rebel lines, an' run up agin our old acquaintances."

"You're right, Shorty. We must git out, an' that mighty quick. How?"

"Shan't we shoot into 'em?" asked the nervous little Pete, and the locks of his and Sandy's guns clicked. "I'm sure I kin hit that feller that's yelling."

"Pete," whispered Shorty, with deep earnestness, "if you ever kept that restless little tongue o' yours still you must do it now. The rebels is probably all around us. Don't you cheep agin, on your life. You're nigher bein' lost than you ever was before in all your born days. Open your ears wide, an' put a stickin'-plaster on your mouth."

They noticed that they had entered a narrow lane, with high fences on either side.

"The only thing to do is to skip back the way we come," whispered Si. "Bout face!"

They had taken but a step or two, when a savage voice called out from the rear with startling nearness.

"Hold on, thar, you Lincolnite pups; whar air yo'uns gwine? Tryin' to sneak off to the Yankees, air yo'uns? I've bin expectin' that trick o' you cowardly conscripts all night, and've stayed back behind to watch yo'uns. Go on with the rijimint, or

I'll blow yo'uns offen the face o' the airth. Go on, I say."

"We'd better go on," whispered Si. "There's no chance to make a break here. Mebbe there will be further ahead. 'Bout face—Forward—March!"

The rain resumed with violence. Si plodded on at the head of his squad, his brain working with 40 horse-power as to ways of escape. He was trying to think how many men there were behind him, and what chance there would be in a struggle with them. The brief sound of their footsteps as they came up the hill, before the rain drowned out all sounds but his own, made him think that there were several times as many as he had—probably a company under the command of a Captain, acting as rear-guard. Not wishing to get any nearer the regiment in front, he did not hasten his footsteps, and presently the voice from the rear sounded alongside of him, as the owner had forged ahead. The outlines of the form accompanying it, as near as Si could make out in the darkness and blinding rain, were bulky, and the voice sounded like that of a large, powerful man.

"Whar's the rijimint?" inquired the voice.

"Right thar ahead, only a few steps," answered Si, imitating as well as he could the Southern dialect. "You kin hear 'em."

"Yes, there's ole Gilmartin's red rag gwine like a fullin' mill," returned the voice. "He's drunk, as usual, when thar's any thing to be done. The minnit he gits his orders he begins to fill up his keg. Hadn't bin for me he'd a' run us plum into the Yankees back thar, and if I hadn't taken the rare-gyard he'd not had half the rijimint in the mornin'. These blasted

conscripts only lookin' for sich a chance as this to skeet out. Astonished you, Lincolnite white niggers find me in your rear, didn't hit? Blocked your little game jest when yo'uns thought yo'uns was playin' hit to win, didn't hit? But I'd had my eye on yo'uns ever since we started. I've alluz had my eye on you, Baz Peters, you big hog thief, and you (to Shorty), Brice Wolf, you long-legged crocodile, ever sence I conscripted you both into the rijimint over thar by Tazewell, when yo'uns was tryin' to git to the Lincolnites."

"Crocodile am I?" muttered Shorty to himself. "Somebody's entirely too free with his tongue. He'll be more respectful before the night's over."

"Lucky yo'uns wasn't put into my company," continued the voice.

"His company," thought Si; "he's a Captain, and has got a company with him. But we'll find some way to jump him."

"Ef yo'uns had," said the voice, "I'd either killed yo'uns or had you killed long ago. But ole Stillman's too easy with you. He's got a streak o' Lincoln in his own gizzard. Astonished yo'uns that I knowed you in the dark. But I've got the best eyes for seeing in the dark in the rijimint, and I'd know that hump on your back, Baz Peters, that you made totin' other folks' hogs, and them ganglin' legs and splay feet o' your'n, Brice Wolf, in a darker night than this. Why don't you say something? Why don't yo'uns talk?"

"Hain't got nothin' to say," answered Si.

"Haint, eh? Well, you kin talk fast enough, and loud enough, when you're argyin' politics. Jest as well for yo'uns to say nothin'. Better do a heap o'

thinkin'—thinkin' on your latter end. Better be sayin' your prayers. You ain't long fur this airth, yo'uns ain't. I'll either have yo'uns shot for example termorrer morning, or yo'uns 'll be put whar your friends the Yanks 'll salt yo'uns. Yo'uns 'll be made to save better men."

They came to where a torrent, a yard wide or more, was tearing across the road, and halted a little before entering it. A feeble flash of lightning revealed that they were nearly out of the lane, with dense woods to the right and left. Shorty bumped up against Si.

"I'm goin' to jump him as soon's we're acrost," Si hastily whispered to Shorty, "an' make a break for the right. You take the next man behind."

"Say, thar, what're yo'uns stopping for?" shouted the Captain, who had made his way across a little above. "Come on, you hounds. Job 'em with your bayonets, you men behind thar."

Si put the muzzle of his gun down to steady himself, and waded across, helping Sandy Baker to do the same. Shorty helped Pete, and by touching them, Si ascertained that all his squad was over.

"Look sharp," he whispered to them. "Me an' Shorty's goin' to jump the Captain an' the others. You boys make a break for the woods an' try to git back to the regiment. Don't mind us."

Si, running his left arm through the sling of his gun, edged imperceptibly up toward the Captain, who continued his volley of general abuse for not crossing faster.

Shorty closed up to the next man. Nearly all the other rebels were still on the other side of the torrent,

and crossing gingerly, one at a time. At the moment the Captain's attention was directed upon hurrying these over, Si, cumbered as he was with his wet equipments, sprang on him like a panther, caught him firmly by the throat, and bore him to the ground. There was a sharp, fierce wrestle, for the Captain, though taken by surprise, was a powerful man, and made a stubborn resistance, until his lack of breath weakened him.

Instead of running, as directed, the other boys circled around Si and punched the body of his antagonist with the muzzles of their gun-barrels, whenever they could get a chance. It was all so swift and silent that the men on the other side of the water had no idea of what was going on.

"Hold on, Baz, don't kill me," gasped the Captain; "Nuff! I'll let you go."

"You'll go along with me, you rebel hound," said Si fiercely, still clinging to his throat. "Git up an' come along with me. But don't you squeak a word, or I'll blow your head off."

He helped the man rise, and then walked him off to the right into the woods.

"Hold on, Yank; you've made a mistake," said the man whom Shorty leaped upon. They went to the ground together, but as he made no struggle, Shorty released his clutch a little and the man whispered:

"Let me up, Yank. I'm with you. I'm your friend. I'm Baz Peters, an' thar's Brice Wolf, an' five or six others. Le' me up quick, an' we'uns 'll help yo'uns."

Something convinced Shorty that the man was telling the truth. He let him up, and instantly there

was a group around him, who began knocking down those who were crossing.

"Come, skin out! Skin out!" said in a loud whisper the man whom Shorty had attacked. "Go right that a-way. Bring Lije along, Brice and Hank."

They all rushed into the woods in the direction Si had taken, and just as the first glimmer of day was breaking, Shorty, who had gone on a little in advance, to reassure Si, came up to him standing under a tree with his prisoner.

"We're all here, Si," said Shorty, "an've brung some East Tennesseans with us."

"Right over that-a-way is the Yankees," said Baz Peters, who had a mountaineer's instinct for courses. "But thar's no use of takin' these carkisses along—indicating the Captain and First Lieutenant, who was also a prisoner. Wash Stembell, and Lije Willoughby, yore evil course is run. You've hung and persecuted all the Union people you ever will. yo'uns 'd better make your peace with yo' Maker, right now, for we hain't no time to waste; we'uns air gwine to kill yo' and git shet o' yo'uns for good an' all."

"Indeed you're not," said Si, stepping between them. "Them men's prisoners, an' you mustn't tetch 'em."

"Why not?" asked the Tennessean with surprise. "They've bin killin' Union men ever sence the war begun, an' now their time's come. Let's settle 'em now an' have hit over with, an' then we won't be pestered no more with they'uns. We know they've killed our own kin."

"Well, that's a matter that must be discussed after

we git to camp," said Si firmly. "You shan't do no murderin' here. Forward, march! Let's git inside our lines as quick as possible."

When full daylight came, Si found that he had, beside his own squad and the two prisoners, 10 East Tennesseans, who had taken the opportunity to get away.

"How in the world did you come to be there, and how'd you know we wuz Yanks?" Si asked Basil Peters, as they walked along.

"Well, you see, we wuz out to git away, an' Wash Stembell somehow got onto we'uns plan. But he went by we'uns in the rain, an' then we'uns fell in with him, without him knowin' hit. When he come onto yo'uns, he thought yo'uns wuz we'uns, an' we'uns didn't know who yo'uns wuz, an' couldn't make out for quite awhile, until that flash o' lightnin' showed yo'uns blue cloze, an' even then we'uns wasn't quite sho', until I sneaked up an' pulled a chunk o' Yankee bread outen yo'uns's haversack. Then I got the boys together tow'ds the front, ready for what mout happen. I wuz jest gittin' ready to speak to yo'uns when yo'uns jumped Wash Stembell."

"I think I understand," said Si.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EAST TENNESSEANS EXECUTE VENGEANCE ON
THEIR PERSECUTORS—ADVANCING THE LINE OF
WORKS.

“**W**HAT air yo’uns gwine ter do with them air skunks arter we’uns git ’em back ter camp?” asked Basil Peters of Si, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder to Capt. Washington Stembell and Lieut. Elijah Willoughby, C. S. A., as the squad came out into the plain road about sunrise, and saw the Union troops in the distance.

“O,” answered Si, indifferently, “I s’pose they’ll be sent to the rear with the other prisoners, an’ then sent to Camp Morton, at Injianapolis, or Camp Chase, at Columbus, or Camp Douglas, at Chicago, or Alton, or some o’ them places. We’ve got mints an’ rafts o’ them everywhere in the North.”

“What!” said Peters, trembling with rage, “send them black-hearted, murderin’ villains back whar they’uns ’ll hev good houses ter sleep in, plenty o’ Yankee grub ter eat, an’ nothin’ ter do but lay ’round an’ git fat, an’ plan more devilment agin we’uns an’ bime-by some o’ they’uns’ friends up North’ll fix hit ter git they’uns out, an’ back they’uns ’ll come, ter be wusser’n ever. I’ve done heered tell all about them prisoners. They don’t hold ’em as want ter git

back no more'n a corn-crib 'll hold feathers. Recolleck John Morgan, that yo'uns had sich a time a-gittin', an' then let git away, ter harry we'uns agin'. Why, Mister, them scoundrels 've done killed more'n a dozen Union men, ter my own knowledge. Why, Mister, Wash Stembell and Lije Willoughby done hung my own cousin, Ralph Peters, afore my own eyes. They'uns burnt Brice Wolf's daddy's barn a-huntin' fur him, an' tied his old daddy, who's a cripple with the roomaticks, up by the thumbs, ter make him tell whar Brice wuz, an Lije Willoughby done slapped his pore ole mother alongside o' the head with his sword, bekase she wuz cryin', an' beggin' for her husband's life. Tell me, Mister, yo'uns ain't gwine ter do nothin' more ter they'uns than ter pen 'em up an fatten they'uns till they git ready ter run away?"

"Don't quite seem the square deal," said Shorty sympathetically. "Men that'd do that to any o' my kin I'd kill, if I was hung for it the next minute."

"No doubt they ought to be punished," said Si determinedly. "But that ain't none o' our business. Our duty 's to take 'em back and turn 'em over to the provost-guard. Then you kin prefer charges agin 'em, an' have 'em tried regular."

"Try they'uns," said Basil Peters, with deep scorn. "As much sense in tryin' a rattlesnake, or a catamount. They'uns don't desarve no trial, no more'n a hungry wolf. They'uns hain't bin givin' no trial ter folks who only wanted ter live at home hones' an' peaceable, under the Gov'ment o' their fathers. They'uns hung 'em up like sheep-killin' dogs."

While this conversation was going on Basil Peters

and Brice Wolf were marching a little in advance, with Si and Shorty, while the two prisoners were under the guard of the vigilant Tennesseans a little in the rear.

Si and Shorty occupied themselves in trying to distinguish the divisions and corps out in front, so as to make their way to their own certainly and quickly.

They passed up over a hog-back, and halted the squad there, while Si and Shorty went forward a little ways to another rise, from which they thought they could see better. They were alarmed by a sudden outburst of firing from the squad, and ran back to the hog-back to see what it meant.

They found their own boys standing with their guns at a ready, while those of the Tennesseans were still smoking, and out to the left a little ways lay Capt. Washington Stembell and Lieut. Elijah Willoughby on the wet grass, dying.

"What does this mean?" Si asked angrily of Basil Peters, who was coolly wiping off his gun.

"Mister, them pizen scoundrels made er break, an' tried ter git away, an' we had ter shoot 'em ter stop 'em," answered Peters, looking squarely in Si's angry eyes. "Yo' see, Mister, they'uns had got 'bout 10 rods afore we fetched 'em. Next jump they'uns'd bin in that timber thar, an' got clean off. I wuzzent lookin' at the time, an' the other boys fired fust, but they'uns wuz kind o' frustrated, an' didn't take good aim. I whirled around an' drawed a bead on Wash Stembell jist as he wuz makin' the last jump fur the timber, an' fetched him. Brice brung down 'Lije Willoughby at the same time."

"Yaas, Mister," drawled Brice Wolf, lazily and

softly, as he pushed back his long hair and confronted Si's searching look with steadfast calmness, "hit wuz mouty lucky that we got they'uns jist as



BASIL PETERS COOLLY WIPES HIS GUN.

we uns did. The next skip they'uns'd a-bin in that thar tall timber, whar we'd never found 'em again."

Sorely perplexed, and exceedingly irritated, Si looked from one to the other, only to meet in their eyes the calm expression of plain truth.

"I wonder if they're akchelly killed?" Si asked, with a gleam of hope, and turning to look at the men.

"Mister, you kin jist bet your last dollar they'uns air dead—mouty dead—too dead to skin," answered Peters in his soft, lazy drawl. "I kotched Wash Stembell jist above the butt o' his right ear. He quit right then an' thar."

"An' I got 'Lije Willoughby jist behind his eye," drawled Brice Wolf. "He never knowed what hurt him, the hound."

Si went over and examined the bodies, and found it just as they had said. Both had planted their bullets precisely where they had aimed.

He examined their pockets, and took out some trinkets and papers, and a couple of old-fashioned bull's-eye silver watches.

"That's ole Jeb Stallins's watch," said Peters, when Si came back with them in his hand, "that Wash Stembell done tuck away when he was a-hunt-in' fur young Jeb to conscript him. Hit done broke ole Jeb's heart ter lose hit. He thought a'most as much of hit as he done of his son."

"And t'other's Wat Brown's," said Brice, "what he done tuck offen him arter he shot him, down thar by Lickskillet."

"Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days," remarked Monty Scruggs, recalling his Sunday school lesson.

"Well, I'll turn those over to the Captain, along with the papers," said Si, "when I make my report. I can't do nothin' more than report what's bin done, an' let the Colonel do what he pleases. Forward! March!"

Si strode on a little ahead of the rest, reflecting gloomily on what had happened.

"Say, that was an awful slick plan of them fellers," burred little Pete Skidmore, as he trotted alongside of Shorty, ahead of the squad, and a little behind Si. "I seen it all, but none o' the rest o' the boys did. I knowed it was a-coming from the time we come out on the level there. You see that there big lunking boy back there, with the eyes like a cow's and yarn suspenders that hitch the seat of his pants up on the back of his neck—he's a 42d cousin o' that rebel Captain. He wasn't as sour on them prisoners, of course, as that big feller and that long-legged one that's been with you and Si—them that they call Baz and Brice. Well, you know, when we got separated going around that big mudhole back there, and crossing the crick, I happened to be with Baz and Brice, and I overheard them talkin' to one another. They didn't pay no attention to me, because they seemed to think that I was so little I couldn't hear well. They fixed it up that the prisoners should be allowed to drop to the rear, in charge of them four boys, and that feller with the big eyes and yarn gallusses should give 'em the hint to skip at the first good chance. Baz and Brice walked on ahead, as if not minding anything, but they put fresh caps on their guns, and half-cocked 'em, and had 'em ready every second, though they pretended to be thinking of something else. When the prisoners made the break that boy with the big eyes and yarn gallusses didn't try to hit 'em, and I don't believe the other fellers with him did. But Baz and Brice whirled around like flashes and put their guns to their faces.

But it seems to me that they waited a whole minute before they shot. Then their guns cracked together, and both the rebels dropped. Say, that Baz feller's deep as a well."

"Pete, are you sure that none o' the rest o' the boys've got onto that?" Shorty asked earnestly.

"Sure," answered Pete. "Sandy was off on the other side and didn't have a chance to see or hear. I'm going to tell him."

"Not on your life you mustn't," Shorty said with a solemn earnestness that startled the boy. "Don't you dare, till I tell you, breathe a word of this to nobody. Keep your lips so tight shut that a can-opener wouldn't pry 'em apart. If you don't you may ruin me and Si. Them fellers got just what they deserved, or rather less'n they deserved, but there's lots o' queer folks in this world, an' most o' 'em are 'round headquarters. Me and Si don't want to more courts-martial for quite a spell yit."

The mention of a court-martial sobered the boy instantly.

"You can betcher life I won't 'cheep," he said earnestly.

Si strode on, getting gloomier every minute over the explanation that he would have to make as to his derelictions as rear-guard, and the unexplainable carelessness which allowed the killing of his prisoners, and men too, of such rank and importance. He thought of the severe cross-examination that Capt. McGillicuddy would subject him to, of his severe looks at his answers, and his finally taking him up to the Colonel, where the ordeal would be still worse, and end he could not tell how. Without saying a

word, and only an occasional glance backward to see that his squad was following and well-closed up, he threaded his way through the teams, took cut-offs to shorten the distance, and find better marching, and finally, in the middle of the afternoon, came up to the brigade lying in line-of-battle on a low hill in front of Pine Mountain.

He was astonished at the glad cheers which welcomed his appearance. Co. Q threw their hats in the air and yelled with such vehemence that the rebels in the trenches across the little hollow thought a charge was coming, and rose up and opened a hot fire.

Everybody, Si and his squad included, jumped for cover, and responded with his musket. After the flurry died down to occasional shots Capt. McGillicuddy came over to Si with beaming face, and said delightedly:

"Sergeant, I'm glad to see you. I've been worrying frightfully about you. I was sure that you had run into the rebels and been captured. They hung around us pretty close for a long time last night, and we turned to the right to get further away from them, and in the mud and the rain, and the rush, nobody seems to have thought of leaving a man at the forks of the road to give you directions. I've been blaming myself terribly for my neglect."

"Why, Cap," said Si, a great load lifted from his mind, "I've bin abusin' my own dumbness for takin' the wrong road. I've told myself a thousand times that I was stupider than an ox for not follerin' a plain trail, such as you left, but I come to a place where the ground was hard, an' the rain had washed

out the tracks, an' I took the road I though you'd gone on, an' run smack into the rebels. Things looked mighty sick for a little while, but we finally all got away, an' brung a rebel Captain and Lieutenant with us."

"Good! Good!" said the Captain, exultingly. "I can trust you to get out of scrapes."

"Shorty done the most," Si reminded him.

"Yes; Shorty's a daisy, too. You're a great pair. I don't believe you have your equals. You brought off all your boys safely?"

"All of 'em," responded Si proudly. "There they are. You kin see 'em."

"Where are your prisoners?"

Si's face fell at once.

"Why, Cap," he said regretfully, "I'll have to confess that I was too careless about them. We brung 'em off all right, with these 10 Union men who wanted to git away from the rebels. After we'd got away the Tennesseans wanted to kill 'em, because they wuz specially bad men, who'd bin persecutin' their people, an' killin' some of 'em. I wouldn't let 'em. But after awhile, me and Shorty wuz bothered about finding the regiment, an' went ahead a little ways lookin' for it, leavin' the prisoners in charge of the Tennesseans. I didn't even do as I should have done, put them in charge of our own boys. It was awful careless, I know, but I was anxious to git back to the regiment. The prisoners made a break, an' they wuz shot before they'd run far. I'm awful sorry. Here are their papers an' things. I'll go right up to the Colonel with you, an' tell him the

whole story, so's you needn't have any responsibility for it. It was all my fault."

"Killed them, did they?" said the Captain, taking the things."

"Deader'n mackerel," said Shorty, speaking for the first time.

"Well," said the Captain nonchalantly, "such accidents will happen in the best regulated families. Don't think any more about it. I'd much rather have you back safe and sound than a hundred dead rebels. So long as the rebels didn't get away and were killed running, the rest don't matter. We have other more important matters on hand than discussing fine points of guard duty. You'd better take those other men back to the provost-guard. They 'll put them with the other deserters who have come over."

"Cap'n," said Basil Peters, who had come up close enough to overhear this last remark, "that's jist what I want ter speak ter you about. We'uns don't want ter go back thar, but stay right hyar with yo'uns. We hain't no desarters. We'uns never belonged ter no rebel army, no more'n a man belongs ter a jail whar he's locked up. We'uns is Union plum through, an hain't no truck nor dicker with rebels, except ter fight they'uns. We'uns never belonged ter the rebel army, but only stayed thar bekase we'uns had ter. We'uns got away the fust chance, and now we'uns want ter fight fer the Union. We'uns've talked hit over amongst ourselves, an' concluded that we'uns'd ruther jine your company nor anybody else's. You've got a good favor, an' we'uns've done tuck ter you."

"Thank you for the compliment, gentlemen," said Capt. McGillicuddy. "We need more men in the company, especially such fine, able-bodied men as you appear to be. But it's pretty dangerous for you to join with me. If the rebels should capture you they'd shoot you down like dogs."

"We'uns 'll look out for that," said Peters. "We'uns've kalkilated all that 'ere."

"But," continued the Captain, "the command that you've come from is probably right out there in front of us. You'll run a great deal more danger of being recognized than if you went back and enlisted in an army in another part of the country."

"No," answered Peters, doggedly. "We'uns want ter stay right hyar. That thar rijimint in front is Gilmartin's, the one that they had we'uns in. Hit's got more mean men in hit than ary other in the Southern Confedrisy, an' hit's the one we want to fout. We'uns want the chance ter kill off every officer in hit. We can't git so good a chance nowhar else. We'uns know this rijimint—the 200th Injianny. We'uns 've heered them over thar talk lots about hit. Hit's allers bin in front o' they'uns, an' probably allers will be, until they'uns is done killed off an' licked out, an' we'uns want ter help do hit. Mister, you'll let us jine, won't you?"

"You think that we can trust them, don't you, Sergeant?" Capt. McGillicuddy asked Si in an aside.

"Yes," answered Si, "in everything but guarding rebel prisoners."

"Well, men," Capt. McGillicuddy said, "I'll go up and see the Colonel, and I think I can arrange it to enlist you."

The Colonel gave his consent, the Adjutant provided enlistment blanks, which each man signed with his "mark," and was duly sworn in. There was a vim with which each swore to bear "true faith and allegiance to the United States, against all enemies and opposers, whatsoever, either foreign or domestic," that increased the confidence and interest of the members of Co. Q in their new comrades. The Tennesseans did not understand what foreign or domestic" meant, but they knew the meaning of "enemies," and guessed that the other words alluded to rebels. When the Adjutant announced that they were mustered in, they were received with cheers, and the members of the company welcomed them with cordial handshakings. The Orderly-Sergeant put their names on his roster, and they were given Springfield muskets, in exchange for their Enfields, from the company's stock.

There was a second line of works near the top of the mountain in front of them, and from this came a group of rebel officers, apparently of high rank, who walked leisurely forward, and began studying our lines. They could be seen to hold field-glasses to their eyes, and to point out to each other the extent and direction of the Union lines.

"Have you any idee who them are?" Si asked Basil Peters.

"From this distance it looks like ole Joe Johnston hisself, and a lot o' his big-bugs. That big, fat man looks like ole Bishop Polk, who commands the corps they had we'uns in," answered Peters. "Wish ter the Lord Almighty I had a gun as big as a log, that'd shoot that fur, an' blow the sanctimonious ole var-

mint to damnation, whar he belongs. The devil's fingers 've bin itchin' fur him this many a day."

As he spoke the group turned and began moving back toward the protection of the works from which they had emerged. Some walked very fast, some actually ran, but the large, fleshy man turned with deliberation, and walked slowly.

A rifled cannon to the left and rear of Co. Q cracked sharply, and a shell went screeching over the little valley. It burst so near the large, fleshy man that he disappeared in its smoke, and when this raised he was seen lying on the ground. A squad of men jumped over the works, picked him up and carried him back.

A cheer ran along our lines, and Si and Shorty, looking in the direction of the battery which had fired the well-aimed shot, saw sitting on their horses near it, Gens. Sherman and Thomas, with a portion of their staff.

"Glory to God!" shouted Basil Peters, springing up on the bank, and swinging his hat. "Ole Parson Polk is gone. One of our inimies is struck down by the hand o' the Lord, which aimed that cannon. Let the good work go on until the last one o' Jeff Davis's followers is sent ter jine him."

"Hullo, Baz Peters, you're over thar amongst the Yankees, are you, yo' cantin', whinin', white-livered Lincolnite!" yelled a man in the rebel works. "I done tole 'em fust thing this mornin', when they missed you, that thar's whar yo' wuz. Take that for your nigger gizzard."

With that the speaker fired, and Peters jumped down behind the bank and seized his gun.

"Yes, Wils Branham," he shouted back, "I'm hyah, an' gwine ter stay. I'm at last whar I belong. You can't shoot no better'n yo' ever could, which wuz none. Take that for your black rebel heart."

His shot was evidently more effective than his opponent's, for it was followed by a groan, at which Co. Q cheered.

"I got in even a better shot on Wash Stembell this mornin'," Peters shouted. "And Brice Wolf laid out 'Lije Willoughby. They're both grub for buzzards today. They won't go 'round conscriptin' nobody no more."

"You infernal deserters," roared the voice which Si and Shorty recognized as that of the Colonel of the regiment, "I'm coming over there for you presently, and then I'll hang you higher'n Haman."

"Look out fur your own skelp, Cunnel Bill Gilmartin," Peters shouted defiantly. "Hit's in more danger 'n our'n. We'uns is comin' arter your'n mouty soon, an' we'll git hit, too."

The mortal bitterness of the hatred between the Tennesseans astonished even the veterans, hardened to violence and bloody deeds.

"The orders are," said the Orderly-Sergeant, coming up from the rear, "that the front rank shall go back there a little ways, where they'll find some cuts of logs, which the pioneers have sawed up. Each man'll get one of these, and roll it in front of him over the works. Then the rear rank'll go back and each man get a cedar bush which he'll find there, with a sharpened point. The front rank will lie down snug behind their logs and roll them across to the edge of that abatis. The rear rank will crawl

along behind, and when the line of logs is formed they will each stick his cedar bush down before the log of his front rank man. Understand, all of you?"

"Great scheme, that," said Si, approvingly, as he rolled his section of a log over the works in front, with Monty Scruggs trailing the brush behind. "Now, mind Monty, and keep keerfully in line behind this back-log as I push it forrard, and keep your head down, and you'll be safe."

"This is Birnam wood going to Dunsinane over again," remarked Monty, remembering his Macbeth.

The rebels opened a sharp fire as the logs began rolling forward, but enough men had been left in the works to reply sufficiently to disturb their aim, and the line rolled forward steadily with few casualties.

At the edge of the abatis the sections of log were quickly arranged so as to afford a continuous protection, and the cedar brush thrust down in front screened the men behind from the rebel sharpshooters.

"Well," said Shorty, contemplating the result with satisfaction, "the longer a man lives the more, by Jehosephat, he finds out. That's a new one on me. The man that thought that out had a head as big as a pumpkin, and plum full o' brains. I'd like to exchange tin-types with him."

"Now," said Si, as he seated himself down behind his log, scanned his squad to see that they were all safely under cover, and cautiously worked a little opening in the cedar branches to see and shoot through, "I'd like to see any butternut scalawag so much as stick a finger up over there. I kin even pare his nails for him at this distance."

As soon as the line settled down, and the firing had died away, the Tennesseans, led by Basil Peters, resumed their taunting of their late companions. The bitterest insults and foulest reproaches that tongue could frame were hurled back and forth across the narrow space between the two lines.

"Lord send that ole Cunnel Bill Gilmartin will only stick his evil poll up," Basil Peters whispered to Si, after crawling up nigh him; "I'm layin' for him, the pizen varmint. He's jinerully mouty skeery erbout exposin' hisself, but he'll do hit when he thinks everything's quieted down. Leave him ter me. Don't nobody shoot around here fur a long time, an' don't nobody shoot afore me. Will yo' do hit?"

"Yes," answered Si, rather reluctantly, for he still had a grudge over the affair of the prisoners, "if he's your meat I'll help you git him. He's bothered us long enough."

"Well, he's right over thar in front o' me," continued Peters. "You kin tell his voice amongst the others. I know jest how he'll do. I've seen him do it a hundred times on the way down hyah. He wears a white hat with a silver star and a feather. Arter everything's quieted down he'll begin projekin with that hat. He'll shove hit up a little ways and then jerk hit back. If hit don't bring any shot arter several times he'll put hit on again, and finally raise his head cautious-like, and peek over the bank. I'll wait till he does that an' then I'll fetch him."

"All right," said Si, "I'll keep the boys quiet, and let you have the field to yourself."

Everything became deathly still along Si's front.

The rain ceased, the clouds cleared away, and the moon came out brilliantly.

"Hist, thar comes the white hat," said Peters in a thrilling whisper. Si looked and saw the hat come up above the bank, and then disappear with a jerk. Again and again it came up, but the motion was too nervous and jerky for it to be on a head. Presently it came up with a slower, steadier motion, as if the wearer were careful to get no higher than would just enable his eyes to clear the little log in front. The whole crown was soon visible, and then the rim.

"He's studyin' whether he kin send Bill Tubbs with a squad down that path thar on a rush ter git me," whispered Peters, with his eyes fixed along his sights. "He'll raise a little higher yit, an' I'll fetch him right in that evil eye o' his'un. I've wanted ter knock hit out a thousand times."

The hat raised a half-inch higher, and Peters's rifle cracked wickedly in the night air.

"The Cunnel's hit! Look out fur the Cunnel thar," cried voices on the other side, and cheers went up from ours.

CHAPTER V.

A MISSION OF VENGEANCE BY THE EAST TENNESSEANS LEADS TO THE BREAKING OF THE REBEL LINES.

THE point at which the 200th Ind. had established itself was not more than 300 feet from the rebels. The two forces were so close together that the murmur of conversation could be heard, and words spoken in a slightly higher tone were plainly audible.

At that proximity, with the bright moonlight, and both lines filled with savagely alert men, the projection of so much as half an inch of the head, body, or limbs beyond the sheltering log was sure to bring a shot which would hit. The screen of cedar bushes proved a better protection to the 200th Ind. than the head-logs were to their enemies. The slits under the head-logs showed shifting lights and dark shadows, when those behind rose up, or neared them, which the Indianians quickly learned to notice, and to get in fine shots. On the other hand, the cedar brush was confusing and the rebels soon grew weary of shooting at the shaking branches, when they realized that these were shaken purposely, in order to draw their fire, and get them to expose themselves to return shots.

An angry outburst of firing had followed the kill-

ing of the Colonel, but this was more passionate than well-directed, and cost the rebels far more injury than they inflicted. The 200th Ind. kept closely under cover, and took instant advantage of any wrathful recklessness on the part of their foes.

The number of casualties among the rebels soon tamed them down, and their firing ceased, except when the irrepressible Pete, Sandy, Monty, Harry, Gid and Alf would stir things up by shaking the bushes, and talking loudly, as if the regiment were preparing for a charge. So soon had even those fresh, green school-boys become accustomed to the continuous, close, bloody, desperate work of the long Atlanta campaign that they regarded tricking the rebels into firing a fruitless volley as a lively practical joke.

There was none of this boy-play, however, for the East Tennesseans. There was no room in their hearts for aught but black, vengeful thoughts. At last had come a chance to wreak their rankling hatred upon men who had been persecuting them and theirs for years. It was unbearable to them that the men over there actually lived, and when they recognized a voice there came with it burning memories of insults and wrongs that made them as fierce, cunning, and artful as hungry panthers to slay the men they heard speak.

"Ole Majah Ben Whitehouse's done tuck command o' the rijimint," Basil Peters explained to Si, as they listened to the orders. "He's a mouty sight pizener 'n ole Cunnel Bill Gilmartin. Bill Gilmartin could be half-white at times, 'specially when he had only about three jiggers o' likker aboard, an' felt jist

good an' comfortable like. But Majah Ben Whitehouse hain't no streak o' goodness in him at any time, no more'n a rattlesnake has. He's a lantern-jawed, flint-hearted lawyer, with no mo' red blood in him than a snake. His long white front teeth stick out like a snake's when he's a-gwine ter strike, an' Ben's allers ready ter strike. He's got little red eyes jist like a snake's, fur they never seem ter shet. Ben comes from the po' white trash up on the headwaters of the Holston. Them big rebels 'round Knoxville done tuck him up, an' made him think that he wuz somebody, an' he done pays 'em by bein' meaner'n a catamount ter respectable Union people down in the valleys, who nacherully despised him an' his ornery, sang-diggin' shif'less folks."

"Yo' must let me have him, Baz," said Brice Wolf, with set teeth. "Yo' done got Cunnel Bill Gilmartin, but I must have Ben Whitehouse. Yo' recollect he done burned my daddy's stable bekase he couldn't ketch me, an' arter he'd done kitched me he tucked me up an' whipped me." The Tennesseean's sallow cheek burned at the thought of the cruel indignity.

"Yes, he's yore meat. Yo' kin have him," returned Peters. "But be mouty sho' yo' git him. I feel as if we'uns ortent ter go ter sleep as long as he cumpers the airth."

"That's his voice now," hissed Brice Wolf, "but he's safe behind that e'er twin oak jist beyant the works."

Thin, nasal tones floated from the direction indicated:

"Keep cool, men. Don't shoot until you're certain of hitting something. Lay low, and save your car-

tridges. We hain't none to waste, and no Yankee alive's worth more'n one. Let him have it just where it'll settle him."

"I'm laying fer yo' Ben Whitehouse, yo' mangy red fox," shouted Brice Wolf. "I've got an account ter settle with yo'. Hit's me, Brice Wolf."

"O, you needn't tell me who you are, you Hiassee alligator," returned the other scornfully. "I'd know that dry-axle screech of yours among a thousand. I'm layin' for you, too, an' I'll get you, too. Stiggins, you an' Mapes keep a special watch for that Lincolnite deserter, and put his light out at the quick as you kin'."

The men indicated fired a couple of shots in obedience to this order, aiming at the sound of Wolf's voice, who laughed sardonically at their failure to hit him.

"He stuck his ugly mug out atween the forks o' that e're twin oak when he gin the order, Brice," said Baz. "But he tuck hit back so quick I didn't git no chance to shoot. If he does hit agin, I'm a-gwine ter git him without regard ter yore first bid."

The gentle wind that had been blowing suddenly increased to a gust, which brought up a mass of black clouds, quenching the bright moonlight in a thick pall of inky darkness. Then the rain began to fall in torrents. It rained most of the time on the Atlanta campaign, but this was one of the deluges that came up unexpectedly, and seemed to drop oceans of water within a few minutes. Every one cowered under it, to wait until it spent its force. But it continued as if it would never quit. The men crawled out of the ditches, and lay flat on the ground,

with their guns and their precious cartridge-boxes under them, as the best protection they could give their ammunition. In the midst of the noise of the dashing rain came a voice from the works in front:

"Say, Yanks, air yo'uns drowned out?"

"Mighty nigh," answered Si. "How is it with you?"

"Plumb drowned. What do yo'uns say ter a King's ex till yo'uns and we'uns kin dreem off the water. No shootin' till the rain's over?"

"All right," answered Si promptly. "You stay inside your works, and we'll stay inside our'n. We want to do a little drainage ourselves."

"All right. Hit's a go. No shootin' now till we pass the word, an' we'uns 'll stay whar we air."

In a moment everybody on both sides sprang up, and with shovels, picks, bayonets, half-canteens, case-knives, and whatever other implements were handy, began cutting ditches to drain away the water which filled the trenches behind the lines, and threatened to literally drown them. They worked hard as long as the rain lasted, and succeeded in getting clear of all the water but that which was falling.

Presently the rain ceased almost as suddenly as it had begun, the clouds drifted away, and the moon came out brightly, revealing the two lines standing up behind their works, looking curiously at each other.

"Much obliged, Johnnies," said Si with a wave of his hand. "Hunt your holes, now. We're goin' to begin business agin."

"All right, Yank," said the other, as the line drop-

ped behind the bank. "So long. We'uns 'll see yo'uns later."

Both sides fired sputtering volleys to show that the little truce was ended, and also to see whether their guns would go off.

"I ketched sight o' Majah Ben Whitehouse when the moon come out," said Brice Wolf, as he settled himself into the mud in the ditch. "He's behind them thar twin oaks for sartin. He jumped back behind 'em when the Sarjint hollered. I'll git him yit, for sho', dod blast his ornery hide."

Something to the far right attracted Basil Peters's attention, and he crawled over to examine it. He presently came back on his hands and knees, and said to Brice Wolf:

"Thar's a gully over thar that runs clean acrost they'uns lines inter our'n. Hit's runnin' bank full o' water, like a tail-race. They'uns had hit full o' brush and truck, but now that's swep't down inter a big pile agin our lines, leavin' the gully free o' everything but water. The banks air deep enough ter screen a man, an' if yo' wait a little bit till the water runs out some, yo' kin snake along under kivver o' the banks, an' come ter whar I think yo' kin have the dead-wood on Majah Ben Whitehouse, a-settin' behind them twin oaks. By rights, I orter have the fust shy at him, sense I found the way, but I'll let yo' go fust, an' I'll foller, and try ter git the drop on Cap'n Jack Wines, who's the next in rank."

"I'll go hit," said Brice Wolf, "I'll go to the gates o' hell fur a good, fa'r chance ter kill Ben Whitehouse." He wiped off his gun and began carefully loading it.

"What's that you say about that gulch cuttin'

acrost their lines?" asked Si, with deep interest, and edging around a little to get a good view of the rushing torrent. "I believe in my soul it does but it's full o' water now, and you can't do nothin' in it."

"But the water 'll run out in half an hour or so, if it don't rain no more," suggested Shorty, who began to see possibilities.

"Couldn't a lot of us slip along under cover o' the banks, and git where we could take them fellers in the rear and rattle 'em for goodness' sake, while the boys let into 'em from the front?" suggested Si.

"The roarin' water 'd keep 'em from hearin' the noise we'd make," said Shorty. "I'm up for anything. This layin' in the mud waitin' an' watchin' an' pot-shootin's gittin' mighty monotonous. I want a change that got's some life in it to wind up this pleasant moonlight night. Go over to the Captain, Si, and ask him to let us try it."

"Look hyah, Mister," said Peters, jealously, "I done found that thar place, an've got the fust right ter hit. Hit's fur me an' Brice thar. If yo'uns all go stompin' over thar, like a bunch o' steers, yo'uns 'll spile everything. Let me and Brice go, an' arter we'uns air through our work, yo'uns kin do what yo' please. But keep quiet. Don't go cavortin' around, an' drawin' they'uns attention ter the place."

"All right, you an' your partner shall go first," said Si, who had come back. "The Captain says that if we think there is a chance we kin try it. When we git ready, he'll have a fire opened up at the other end o' the line, to draw their attention. But I don't know as that's necessary. If they're as tired an' sleepy as the boys on this side, they won't be keepin'

a sharp lookout anywhere, an' that chance is in our favor. It's nigh midnight, now, an' they must be mighty sleepy, after the racket we've bin givin' 'em all day."

Dead stillness reigned along the lines, only broken by the sound of the water rushing through the gully, and occasional shots far away to the right and left by dozing men, fallen asleep under over-powering fatigue, which yet could not banish the haunting sense of danger.

The moon, large as a cart-wheel, and glorious in her fullness, flooded the damp earth with her silvery light, and seemed to breathe love, and peace and gentleness, utterly at variance with the tumult and strife of the day.

Si remembered that the moon shone just that way over the wet fields at home, one night after a welcome rain which put new life into the corn and wheat, and he walked home with Annabel down the lane which led from his father's house to her father's. Puddles of water lay along the ground, as now, and he felt the first flushings of his young love and care for her, as he guided her steps past them, and helped her over the worst places. And there had been something thrilling in the sweetly responsive way in which she yielded to and accepted his guidance and help. It was the definite beginning of the feeling that they belonged to one another, and would travel thus down that infinite lane which leads to eternity. He put his hand in his bosom and touched Annabel's picture, as he had grown into the habit of doing, when face-to-face with imminent crises. His last

thought would be of her before the whirlwind of action which would end God alone knew how.

Something of the same thoughts possessed Shorty. For a few minutes he took his eyes off the line in front, sat upright behind his bushy screen, closed them, put his hand on the precious packet which contained his souvenirs of Maria, and abandoned himself to thoughts of her, now sleeping in maidenly beauty and innocence in that dear old farmhouse in the Valley of the Wabash. Dominant over every other was the burning question asked himself a hundred thousand times, "How much and in what way does she care for me?" and the ever-recurring answer, "It don't make no difference. I'd give more for her least liking than the most any other girl could give me."

His thoughts were broken in upon by Basil Peters crawling up and whispering:

"Thar's four o' we'uns a-gwine ahead. Fust Brice, then me, then Wils Brooks, then Eph Young."

"That puts me an' Shorty too fur behind," demurred Si. "We're non-commissioned officers, and by rights orter go first, but I give way to you an' Brice. I won't give up to no more."

"But, Mister," pleaded Basil Peters, "we four've each got a man we'uns air achin' ter git. We'uns mayn't be likely ter git 'em in the jinerul ruction. Let we'uns go fust an' git 'em sho' an' hard, an' then yo'uns kin have all the rest. Yo'uns kin pile in the whole army then, if you keer ter."

"Well, go ahead," yielded Si.

"Here, Pete," said Shorty, waking that youth from his uneasy slumber in the mud, "you an' Sandy stay

back an' take care of the blankets an' haversacks. Harry, wake up Monty, Alf an' Gid there, an' crawl along behind me an' Si. Don't make no more noise than a cat. Sandy, slip down to the Orderly-Sergeant, and tell him we're startin'."

"I want to go, too," begged Pete.

"No," said Shorty authoritatively. "You stay behind, an' as this is man's work it'd better be you."

"You always make me stay behind," whimpered Pete.

The brushwood and stuff which had been washed out of the gulch formed a big clump against the Union line, and behind this the four Tennesseans and Si and Shorty gathered. Lying flat on the ground in their rear, were Harry, Alf, Gid and Monty, and others of Co. Q, as they awakened, crawled along the places in the rear, ready for an instant rush.

Si carefully surveyed the gulch, as far as he could, without attracting the notice of the rebels. It was a yard or more wide, and probably three feet deep, with rough, jagged banks, that would be a good protection to those crawling up, from the fire from either side. The abatis on the banks afforded additional protection. The main danger was the rebels might have noticed the opening made by the gulch, and have a squad stationed to fire along its length. On this they would have to take their chances.

"They may have a whole company lyin' for us at the head o' the gulch," Si whispered to Shorty.

"Well, if they have, they have, that's all," returned his partner. "We've got to take the risk. It's worth

it. War's risky business, at best, an' one risk more or less don't matter."

The gulch had been running nearly bank full, but the water had now subsided until it was less than a foot in depth, but still coursing with great force and noise.

"Better risk hit now," said Basil Peters, impatiently probing the water. "The longer we wait the more chances there'll be agin we'uns, and the longer them skunks 's a-livin'. Let's git at 'em."

"Go ahead," answered Si.

Fixing their bayonets, and capping their fresh-loaded guns, the Tennesseans, one by one, let themselves down into the water, and began creeping forward with the stealthy noiselessness of their Indian and panther-hunting forefathers. Their footsteps did not make a break in the rushing noise of the water, and they hugged the dark left bank so closely that they seemed part of the swaying shadows of the brush and weeds.

Si and Shorty tried to follow as stealthily, but it seemed that the splash they made must arouse the rebels.

Brice Wolf slipped around the ragged edge cut by the water in the rebel bank, and peered cautiously right and left. To the right there was no one for some distance. Apparently, at its flood the water had swept over there, and left a thick layer of thin mud, which made it untenable for those stationed there. A log had been placed transversely, to stop enfilading shots, and probably the rebels were behind that, either watching their front, or else succumbing to weariness and sleep. Nearby on the left lay a

man with his gun-barrel thrust through the crack under the head-log. He had been watching a chance for a shot, when he had been overcome with intense fatigue, and gone to sleep.

"Hit's Madison Simms," Bruce Wolf whispered back to the others. "Wils, there's your man. Jump him, but don't make no noise. Use your bay'net."

Wilson Brooks, the third in line, swung himself noiselessly up on to the bank and lay there for an instant, as if he was one of the defenders of the line. Then, as the others crept onward he edged over toward his enemy, and suddenly rising, plunged his bayonet through the sleeping man's back, sank to the earth again, and crawled over to rejoin his companions.

He came to them, halted in a clump of weeds and briars growing out of the rank soil by the edge of the swale.

"I sent him the trip," he said in a low drawl. "He never kicked. Didn't know what hurt him. Baz, your man, Cap Wines, is a-settin' over thar on a rock, fast asleep."

"I've done seed him," said Peters, significantly.

"And your'n, Eph, Toms Young, is a-settin' on another rock ter his right, fast asleep, too."

"I've done seed him," said Eph, bringing his gun to his shoulder.

"And thar's mine," said Bruce Wolf, with the fierce, low hiss of a rattlesnake. "Thar's Majah Ben Whitehouse, a-settin' behind them thar twin oaks. But I'm not a-gwine ter shoot him. I want him ter know jist who sends him ter ole Beelzebub, an' what hit was fur, an' ter carry my picture along with him,

ter remember me when he's a roastin'. Don't none of yo' shoot yit fur a minute or two. I'm a-gwine



“USE YOUR BAY’NET.”

right up ter him, an’ wake him, an’ then sock my bayonet inter him.”

He got down and crawled up near to where the Major sat behind the trees dozing. Then he stood

up before his victim, and brought the butt of his musket down on a dry branch at his feet with such force as to break it. The Major started, rubbed his eyes and awoke. Not recognizing the form before him he said:

"What are you doing away from the lines? Go back to your place at once, and stay there."

"I ain't a-gwine back, Majah Ben Whitehouse," said the Tennessean in a savage whisper, "but you're a-gwine whar you didn't expect ter, yo' murderin' villain. Hit's me, Brice Wolf, what yo' tucked up an' licked like yo' would a black nigger. Know me, now, yo' devil's imp?"

The Major instinctively reached for his revolver, but as his hand touched the holster, Brice Wolf drove his bayonet through him with such force that the point entered the hard wood behind and remained firmly fixed. Brice twisted the gun out of the bayonet, and strode back toward the rest.

"This is too much like cold-blooded murder," said Si, who had been ranging his boys, as they came up, where they could open fire on the rear of the rebel line. "I can't stand it. I won't stand it. I believe in givin' even rebels a chance for their lives. Hooray for Injianny!" he shouted at the top of his voice. "Hooray for the 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry. Wake up, rebels, we're onto you."

With that he fired into the rebel line, and the rest followed his example. Basil Peters and Eph Young fired with deadly aim upon their victims, and the whole of Co. Q came streaming up the gulch, followed by the other companies, while the rest of the brigade, at first opened fire from their fronts. but

then seeing the fight going on in rear of the rebel lines, sprang forward, made their way through the abatis, and speedily joined the 200th Ind., which was running the surprised and discomfited rebels back to their second line, where fresh troops were rushing to their assistance as fast as they could be roused.

Realizing, with quick soldierly instinct, that they had gone as far as they could, the brigade gathered up their prisoners, and fell back to the line they had just captured, for protection against the increasing volume of fire poured upon them.

A few steps from the works Eph Young fell like a log with a shot through his head, and Brice Wolf fell almost on top of him, from a bullet through his chest. Shorty and Basil Peters picked him up and carried him over the bank to shelter. Si stayed outside until he was sure all his boys were back, and then leaped over, and began helping the rest "turn the works" and put them in shape for facing the other way. The early morning dawned before they got this completed, and then Si and Shorty began to take an account of what had happened.

They found Brice Wolf lying motionless on the ground, and brought the Surgeon to him, who forced a little stimulant into his mouth and revived him.

"He can't live but a little while," said the Surgeon; "there's no use taking him back."

"What's that you say, Mister, that I'm a-dyin'?" feebly inquired Wolf.

"Yes, I'm very sorry to say that you have only a few minutes more to live. Anything that you want to say?"

"I done killed Majah Ben Whitehouse for sho', didn't I?" asked Brice.

"Yes, you certainly killed him," said Shorty. "He's settin' right over there where he was when you struck him. You kin see him from here."

"Raise me up and let me see him," whispered Brice. "Yes, thar he is," he continued, with the light of vengeance in his eyes. "Thar he is, jest as I thought. I was half-afeared I'd dreamed hit. I'd dreamed hit so often afore I was able ter do hit, that I was afeared I'd dreamed hit agin. Lay me down agin. Good-by."

CHAPTER VI.

THE BLOODY ASSAULT ON KENESAW MOUNTAIN—THE 200TH IND.'S BITTER STRUGGLE TO REACH THE REBEL WORKS—FEARFUL LOSSES—SI AND SHORTY TAKEN PRISONERS.

“**T**HAT was quite a neat hitch you worked on the rebels, Col. McBiddle,” said the General, coming up to the Colonel, while the men were resting from their work of “turning” the rebel lines, and making fires of the abatis, to cook their breakfasts. “You pierced the rebel line neatly and most unexpectedly. It reflects great credit, not only on the brigade, but on the whole division, which has been enabled by it to advance and strengthen its lines. It’s a great night’s work for the Wahoo Brigade. I shall take great pleasure in giving you full credit for it, in my report to the General commanding, and commending your soldierly enterprise to his favorable consideration.”

“Thank you, General,” said the Colonel, saluting. “Praise from you is praise indeed. I really don’t deserve it, though, for the greater part of the credit belongs to Capt. McGillicuddy here, who found the break and pushed his company through it. The rest of us only followed him. He ought to be made a Major for it.”

"I shall have to pass the compliment in turn," said the Captain. "The credit is due to my wide-awake and indefatigable Serg't Klegg and Corp'l Elliott, who are always on the lookout for chances to do good work. I only gave them leave to go ahead, and then followed them."

"Really, Cap," said Si, blushing, through his deep coat of tan, "me and Shorty oughtn't to take to ourselves all you give us. We only follered them Tennesseans, who found the break, an' led the way. We didn't expect to do nothin' more than bust their line a little, and git some prisoners."

"This war's gittin' too durned civil," growled Shorty, over his half-canteen of frying meat. "Better save them compliments till we git away with the rebels for good and all. When we bust that line over there (and he looked toward Kenesaw Mountain) then there'll be some sense in complimentin' one another."

"I suppose that's our next work, General," said the Colonel, pointing to the swarming host in the next line of works. "Is it to be an assault, or another flank movement?"

"Can't tell just yet. Schofield and McPherson are maneuvering to make Johnston stretch out still farther, and develop a thin spot where we can break through."

"Certainly it does not look like it over there," said Col. McBiddle.

"I'll admit that it does not. But Johnston's line is now fully 15 miles long, and there must be weak spots somewhere, unless he has got the whole Southern Confederacy out there, which we know he has

not, for there's plenty of them in front of Grant, and Banks seems to have found more than enough."

"Well, so far," returned the General, "though Joe Johnston has shown wonderful Generalship in avoiding a crushing blow from us, and compelled us to attack him, when we did attack him, behind strong works, we have been hurting him badly every day, and he has lost far more in killed, wounded and prisoners than we have, to say nothing of the ground he has been forced to yield. He can't go on forever losing this way."

"He must have thin spots in his line, when it's as long as it is. He can't have men enough to hold it strongly from one end to the other. He has been playing off mountains and woods on us for men. That we know."

"Yes, and we also know that we have been playing off mountains and woods on him for men, or we couldn't have stretched out for 40 or 50 miles, as we have frequently done, to get around his flanks. It has been a magnificent game of bluff and pretense on both sides, mingled with awful hard hitting at times, but Sherman has played his side of the game a great deal finer than Joe Johnston, and that is why we have pushed them back nearly 100 miles from where we started two months ago, in spite of their having all the advantages of this terrible mountain country, where they can make an impregnable fort out of a hill in an hour's work."

"Well, we know, for sure, that he has'nt as many men as he seems to have. Since we started in at Rocky Face Ridge, we have been from one end of his line to the other, and we have always met the

same regiments. Except the Georgia militia, there have been very few new commands come up to him, so that there must be thin spots in his long line, and if we can only find one and break through it, Johnston's army will be destroyed in a day."

"That is true. The only thing for us to do is to keep 'pegging away,' as Lincoln says. As soon as your men have had something to eat, Colonel, you will push out a strong skirmish-line to that little rise there, and start a line of pits. I'll see that the battery helps you all it can."

"But, General, my men are clear worn out. They are nearly dead for rest and sleep."

"So is everybody, for that matter. I don't know anybody who isn't. And if the rebels are not made of iron they're worse off than we are. We have kept them on the tenter-hooks every minute since we crossed the Etowah, and those fellows out there in front of us must be more tired than we are. We want to make them still more tired. We must keep our lines right up against theirs all the time."

"All right. Forward goes the skirmish-line. Capt. McGillicuddy, take your company, carry that rise in front, and establish a line of rifle-pits."

This was the signal for a fresh outburst of the storm of cannon and musketry fire, which almost hourly shook the hills far and near throughout the long Summer days, while Sherman, holding fast to the railroad on his extreme left, and slowly crowding Johnston back along it, was reaching his right flank far out into the country to pass and envelop Johnston's left flank, and gain the railroad at Marietta, behind him and his mountain fastnesses. Co. Q went

on a run to the crest of the rise, and then fell flat on the ground, and began digging for life with their bayonets and half-canteens, to throw up little protecting mounds of dirt, while the battery hurled a shower of shells over their heads into the rebel works, and the rest of the brigade swept the opposite line with a searching musketry fire.

In an astonishingly short time the little mounds in front of each man grew big enough to join one another, stones, chunks, and brush were feverishly gathered up and thrown in front to increase the pile, and presently the bank grew high enough to allow the use of picks and shovels, when it went forward more rapidly, until a formidable line of defense rose under the very eyes of the rebels striving to prevent it.

The moment that this was accomplished, and the men felt secure from the devastating musketry fire, they succumbed to the overpowering fatigue, and sank upon the ground. But, tired as they were, they sprang up again at the first word that the rebels were swarming over their works to drive them back. Instantly and instinctively they were in line behind their little bank, pouring a well-aimed, destructive fire on the rebels, which, with that from the right and left, checked the sortie and drove the enemy back to cover.

"That wuz ole Gilmartin's rijimint agin," said Basil Peters, cautiously scrutinizing the dead-strewn ground in front, "an' by appearances hit got salivated wuss'n ever afore. Mouty big passel o' them sang-diggin' scoundrels 've got their last dose. Good riddance o' bad rubbish. Wisht I could see the last

o' they'uns a-layin' out thar with an ounce o' lead through his gizzard."

"We'll probably make a return call on 'em in the mornin'," said Shorty, stretching his length on the ground in the welcome sunshine which had at last returned, apparently to stay. "We'll bust their lines this time for certain, an' then git the rest of 'em. Great Jehosephat, I hope the rain's over at last. I'm blue-moldier than I've bin since the Tullyhomy campaign. Come, Pete, lay down here with me, an' git what rest you kin. You'll need it about 3 o'clock tomorrow morning, when we'll be called up for an early visit acrost the way."

Again he was disappointed. The dawn showed the works in front entirely tenantless, their occupants having retired to the still stronger works on the frowning slopes of Kenesaw Mountain.

"This sort o' thing can't go on much longer," Si reasoned to Shorty, as they lay and rested during the day, the first respite from goading effort that they had had for many weeks. "The rebels ain't goin' to be allowed to fall back over the whole o' Georgia without a big fight. I feel in my bones that this is only the calm before a big storm like that of Chickamaugy. Sherman ain't wastin' a fine day like this for nothin'. We'll have it red-hot before many days, or I'm no prophet."

"The way the army's massing up around us looks like it," replied Shorty. "You kin see they're pilin' in men from every direction, an' as we seem to be in the center we're likely to have a front seat in the show."

"I certainly hope they've found that weak spot in

Johnston's lines that we've bin huntin' for so long," returned Si. "But the looks of things in the front don't indicate it. I've bin talkin' with several boys who've bin out there where they could git a purty good sight o' the works. They say they're strongest we've come agin yit—banks eight or nine feet high, an' lookin' very thick, with deep ditches, an' 200 or 300 feet o' abatis in front, an' all sort o' entanglements. Some prisoners said that Johnston had 4,000 niggers workin' for months on the fortifications, an' d bin calculatin' ever since he left Dalton to give us our big fight here."

"Well," said Shorty philosophically, "we've heard all that story about awful strong works before, an' nothin' came of it. We had 'em at Tullyhomy, an' then agin at Buzzard Roost, an' they didn't amount to shucks agin us. Pap Thomas's piloted us through all right to this time, an' I'm goin' to bank on him for whatever's ahead. He gits paid for worryin' about that sort o' things. I don't. The \$2 a month extra I git for bein' a Corporal isn't more'n enough to pay the wear an' tear of my mind in managin' the reliefs when I'm Corporal o' the Guards."

The Orderly-Sergeant came up from the rear, and his face and manner at once arrested Si and Shorty's attention. His countenance bore a look of deep solemnity, instead of the captious austerity that was his prevailing mien, and his walk was changed from his usual brisk militariness to quiet thoughtfulness. By an almost imperceptible movement of his head and eyes he indicated to Si and Shorty that he wanted to speak with them apart, and they quietly rose and followed him behind a clump of bushes.

"Boys," he said, in quiet, even tones, without a trace of his usual snappish asperity, "it's at last up to us. It's as we have been hearing for the last two days as the reason for the concentration of the troops around us. Tomorrow morning the army's going to make a square butt against the works, and try to bulge through, break old Johnston in two in two places and grind him to pieces. Old Sherman's got it up his nose that this flanking business is played out, and he's going to try to bust Johnston wide open, and be done with it."

"Not a bad idee," said Si; "I second that motion."

"Has he found the weak place that we've bin lookin' for all Summer?" inquired Shorty.

"There's just the point," said the Orderly. "He's got tired of looking for a thin place, and has got it into his head that his men are so much better than Johnston's that we can smash them anywhere we choose to hit them. This army's to bull right over those heavy works out there, while McPherson, with the Army of the Tennessee, is to smash them on Little Kenesaw, a mile to our left."

"Well, what's the matter with that?" asked Si, puzzled at the subdued, hope-lacking expression of the man who was usually keenly sanguine as to the success of any movement. "If any army kin do it the Army o' the Cumberland kin. It's never yit bucked up agin anything that it hain't downed. Them works look mighty strong, but I don't know as they're any worse'n Liberty Gap. If they are, all about it is for us to buck a little harder."

"What makes you look so down in the mouth, Jim?" asked Shorty curiously. "If I didn't know

you so well, I'd think you had a tetch o' the buck fever. But this ain't no wuss than a hundred things I've seen you sail through with head and tail up. Ain't you well, Jim?"

"Boys," said the Orderly earnestly, "I wouldn't say this to a soul but you, but this is going to be the awfulest slaughter this division's ever had, not even excepting Stone River and Chickamauga. It's going to be torn all to pieces in that infernal abatis, and we're never going to cross those works. We're going to be piled up in front of them, and I'm going to be one that'll lay there with his eyes to the sky."

"Nonsense, Jim," said Si cheerfully. "You're goin' through all right. We're all goin' through. We'll plant the flag o' the 200th Injianny on the works inside o' 15 minutes after the signal's given, an' you'll be throwin' up your hat an' yelling when it is done."

"Why, Jim," added Shorty, "what's given you the blues now? You've had the best kind o' luck so far. You haven't had a scratch, though you was right alongside o' me and Si when we was laid out. I believe you're comin' down with the ager. Better go to the Surgeon an' git a big slug o' whisky an' quinine. That'll fetch you around all right, an' you'll be as chipper as any o' us."

"'Tain't nonsense, and 'tain't the ague," said the Orderly, with calm insistence. "I don't know how I know it, but I know it just as I know that this is the 26th day of June, that before noon tomorrow I'll be laying in the middle of that abatis, with a bullet-hole in my head, and a pile o' Co. Q around me."

Somebody else 'll call the roll of Co. Q tomorrow evening, but there won't be many to call."

"Jim, you certainly are coming down with the ager—the reg'ler Wabash ager," expostulated Si. "It always commences with that creepy, skeery feelin' that makes a man feel like as if he was goin' to be bit by a mad dog, or fall down a well, or his hoss kick his head off. I've had it. Go up to the Surgeon an' git some quinine."

"It ain't the ague, I tell you," said the Orderly. "I know the symptoms of the ague as well as you do. I ain't rattled. You know me well enough for that. I know just what's coming, and am ready for it."

"Why don't you tell Capt. McGillicuddy, an' he'll be sure to send you off on some duty, an' not let you go in the charge. You're too good an Orderly for him to run any risk o' losin'."

The Orderly's cheek reddened. "Do you suppose, Si Klegg, that I'd put up any story like that to keep out o' the charge? Where did I ever allow you fellows to go that I didn't go with you? No, I'm not doing any whimpering around the Captain. I'm only telling you boys, because you are my best friends, in spite of all the little tiffs we've had, and because I'm sure you're going to get through. You've had your dose, and there ain't anything more coming to you. I've escaped so far, and now it's going to come to me in a heap. I don't want either of you to breathe a word of this to any one. Here's my mother's picture, and a young lady's. Si, I want you to take them and send them back to the addresses you find, with a letter telling them the news. Now, let's talk no more about this. There's other things more im-

portant. The orders are for reveille at 5 o'clock tomorrow morning, breakfast, and immediately form in line, with guns and cartridge-boxes only, the regiment in close column by division, the 200th Ind. in front, the rest of the brigade behind. The whole corps will be massed up solid, and with all the artillery in action that can be brought to bear, and if mortal men can burst through those lines it will be done. There will be a hell opened up there which will make anything that we have seen before seem like only a Fourth-of-July celebration. You fellows who live through tomorrow will have something to remember as long as you live. Now, we mustn't say anything to discourage the boys. I'm going to tell them that we are sure to capture the works, and I know you will do the same. Let's get supper, and to bed as soon as possible, for we'll need all our strength tomorrow."

Si and Shorty clumsily tried to dissipate the Orderly's premonitions as to his fate, but he would not hear any more on the subject, and directed them, in his old tones of command, to get things in shape for the night and readiness for the morrow—fill up the cartridge-boxes, and prepare rations for a big breakfast early in the morning, which would be the last opportunity to eat until after the momentous struggle.

In this work Si and Shorty soon forgot all about the Orderly's forebodings, and when they had finished lay down on their blankets, and were soon fast asleep.

The fateful morning of June 27, 1864, dawned bright and warm, a glad contrast to the weeks

of rain through which the army had been struggling. It seemed an augury of success, and the army needed all this to encourage it, for in spite of the dense masses of men with which the woods were packed in front of the point selected for attack; in spite of the cannon bristling grim and threatening from every position from which artillery could be made effective; in spite of the memories of past successes which animated the men and their officers, the difficulties of the task before them were apparent and appalling. The great ridges of red clay which seamed the slopes, looked like great fort, an impregnable citadel. The great ridges of red clay which seamed the slopes, looked like mighty walls of solid masonry, against which no force could prevail. Before them were deep ditches, even more formidable to the assailants, and before these long rows of jagged *chevaux-de-frise*. Before these still were hundreds of feet of *abatis*—trees felled toward the enemy, and their tops through which it would seem that nothing but a snake or a rabbit could make its way. Batteries, forts and bastions broke the long line of breastworks into still heavier fortifications, which supplied emplacements for artillery to reinforce the infantry fire with canister and shrapnel.

Having finished their breakfast, the 200th Ind. piled its blankets and haversacks, and carrying only guns, cartridge-boxes and canteens, formed in a column of five lines, with a front of two companies. Capt. McGillicuddy had command of the front division of two companies, with the Orderly-Sergeant in command of Co. Q, and Si, with his squad, aug-

mented by the remaining eight Tennesseans, held the right of the company.

Before them, sitting with easy grace upon their horses, were the Colonel and his Adjutant, who calmly scanned the short sweep of ground, which was soon to boil as a cauldron, with the fires of death, hate and destruction.

Si, leaning on his gun, anxiously studied the abatis for some indication of possible path through it, and watched the rebel regiments swarming down to meet the impending attack.

"Full house over there—the whole family at home," said Shorty laconically, to break the oppressive silence which ruled over all. "But by the way the woods are fillin' up behind us we seem to have some friends come to meetin'. There will be a scraunch when these two crowds come together."

"O, God," suddenly burst out Basil Peters, in loud, impassioned prayer, "be with us, Thy sarvents, this day of trial an' battle. Help us in our need, an' lend us the mouty power o' Thine arm, for hit is in Thy cause that we fout, an' Thy inimies that we seek ter overthrow. Give us the victory, O, God, that righteousness may dwell in the airth, an' we may worship Thee with glad hearts, for Thine is the power, an' the Kingdom, and the glory, forever. Amen."

The words had come with startling unexpectedness from the lips of a man who had seemed only actuated by thoughts of bloody revenge, but they appeared forced out of his heart by the agony of mortal anxiety. The Colonel and Adjutant in front lifted their caps and bowed their heads at the sound of the first words, and joined in the chorus of fervent

Amen which rolled up reverently from the lips of the men.

"It's 8:30," said the Adjutant, looking at his watch, and making a note in his book. "We should have started a half hour ago."

"As usual," remarked the Colonel, with a shrug of his shoulders, "some men will start late, and delay everybody else. I wish the signal would come. It may be our death-note, but anything is more bearable than this terrible suspense. We are not improving our chances by giving the rebels full warning of what we intend."

There was another long, sickening half-hour of waiting, in which few words were spoken, as the men leaned on their guns, and shifted nervously from one foot to the other, with their intent eyes fixed on their officers, or the enemy's array.

"There goes the battery in front of Grose. Just 9 o'clock," said the Adjutant, making the note in his book, and carefully replacing both book and watch in his pocket. "The ball opens."

"Attention, battalion!" called the sweet, silvery, penetrating tones of the Colonel. "Carry, arms! Right shoulder shift—arms! Forward—guide center—March!"

In all Si's army experience, he had never seen anything like the storm which burst out at that moment. The artillery along the whole of Sherman's line bellowed with a thousand thunders. The whole long slope of Kenesaw shook with the roar of the answering rebel cannon, and was veiled in the clouds of white smoke, with fierce tongues of lurid lightning. As the 200th Ind. reached the edge of the abatis the

air was full of a hurtle of musket-balls and canister, which tore the limbs of the trees, and sent them screeching amidst the charging column. The Colonel's horse was mangled into shreds by a shrapnel shell, and another took off the head of the Adjutant's horse. Covered with blood, both officers leaped to their feet, waved their swords, and shouted to the men to press on. The next instant the Adjutant fell.

All semblance of a line was lost in groups struggling fiercely forward as best they could through the abatis, tearing it aside, and breaking it by main strength whenever possible, to clear a way. At the head of one of these groups raged Si and Shorty, who each seemed to have the strength of 10 men as they tore off the great limbs, broke branches, and strove to open a way, while the bullets and canister beat like hail all around. Close behind were the Colonel and Capt. McGillicuddy, encouraging and praising them and cheering forward those behind. Half-way through the abatis the Colonel dropped with a gentle groan, heard above the vicious whistle of the canister. Si turned and sprang toward him.

"Go on, go on," commanded the Colonel with a wave of his hand. "Don't mind me. Capt. McGillicuddy's in command now. Follow him."

There was another awful rod of struggle through the abatis, and Si and Shorty became dimly conscious that the crowd behind them was desperately thinning. But Basil Peters and several of the Tennesseans, and as near as they could notice, all of their own boys were still with them, working like demons to get through.

They were in sight of the sharp spikes of the

chevaux-de-frise, at the further edge of the abatis, when blood spurted from Capt. McGillicuddy's breast and he reeled and fell.

"Go on, go on! Lead the men on, Sergeant. Don't check for a minute. You can come back for me after you've got through."

"Where's the Orderly?" said Si, looking around for an instant, in a moment's lull. "He's in command now."

"O, the Orderly was killed while you and Shorty were lifting that big tree back there," answered Harry Joslyn. "Shot square through the head."

"Forward, boys!" shouted Si. "One more long pull and we'll be through. Forward! Forward!"

He and Shorty made one more supreme effort, and were through the abatis and struggling with the chevaux-de-frise when a new regiment arriving in the rebel works fired a solid, blinding volley, which swept everything around them with the besom of destruction. They were so near the works that they could feel in their faces the hot flash of the guns. When the smoke lifted, Si only saw near him Shorty and several of his squad, and only Basil Peters, of the Tennesseans. A swift glance to the rear showed not a man standing erect in all the wide tangle of abatis. Back beyond it were men running to seek the shelter of the works in the rear.

"Shorty, the charge has failed," said Si, with a sinking heart.

"So it seems," and we're in for it," answered Shorty, composedly loading his musket, which he had neglected for the work on the abatis.

"Say, Yanks," called a voice from the works.

"Drap your guns and surrender. You're goners. We've got you dead."

"I guess we've got to, Shorty," said Si. "It'd be murder an' not right to the other boys to try to git away. They'd git us all before we could go five steps."

"You're right," said Shorty, holding up his hands. "We surrender."

"I'll never surrender ter no infernal rebel alive," said Basil Peters, taking deliberate aim at a head appearing above the works which he recognized. "I'll die right here, but I'll take you along with me, Bill Perkins, yo' varmint."

He fired and was instantly shot down himself.

"Now, the rest o' you all come right along the edge o' the ditch thar, to that ere log that lays acrost the ditch, and come inside," commanded the voice inside, and the command was obeyed.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST DAY OF IMPRISONMENT AND ITS BITTER EXPERIENCES.

THE terrific roar of battle rapidly subsided as soon as it was realized that the assault had failed. Neither side had ammunition to waste firing at that prodigious rate after the emergency had passed. The rebels only kept up their showers of bullets and canister until the maimed fragments of the columns had regained the shelter of the works, and our gunners and infantry desisted as soon as the rebels stopped.

The quieting down at the points of assault was followed more slowly by the cessation of the thundering along the more remote parts of the line, where they had only been "making a demonstration."

This gave the rebels immediately in front of Si and the remnant of the 200th Ind. opportunity to concentrate their attention upon their prisoners. Looking across the ditch at the slit under the head-logs, Si saw it full of cocked muskets, aimed directly at him and his men, and at that short distance every bullet would find its mark.

Si and Shorty were too good soldiers to make fools of themselves, especially when their folly would be the death of the boys for whom they felt responsible.

Therefore, without more than a hasty glance back over the abatis, in which so many of his regiment were lying dead and wounded, and a longing look at the works beyond whither the survivors had run for shelter, Si faced to the right and walked along the path on the edge of the ditch toward the log which crossed it and gave admission to the works. He was followed in single file by Shorty, Pete Skidmore, Harry Joslyn, Alf Russell, Monty Scruggs, Gid Mackall, and Sandy Baker.

"Come in, Yanks. Glad to see you," said a tall, slender man, dressed in butternut homespun, but of better make and fit than the clothing of his companions. On his collar were the two bars of a Captain. "Sergeant, have your men pile your guns and things right over there. I see you belong to the 200th Ind. The 200th Ind. are old acquaintances of ours. We've been in front of you ever since Stone River, but this is the first time that we've got any of you alive and unwounded. We captured some of your wounded at Stone River and again at Chickamauga."

"We never expected to be ketched this way," said Si, ruefully, "but this has bin a mighty unlucky day for the regiment—the very worst it ever seen. I'm afeared that it'll never fight you agin. I think nearly all of it's layin' over there in the brush."

"O, no," said the Captain consolingly. "Lots of them got away. Your Color-Sergeant, who is a gallant fellow, got back with the colors, and I saw a large number go with him. He was right behind you when he started back. We expected to get your colors, and wanted them bad. But when we yelled

at you your Sergeant saw his chance and whirled and ran back with them, followed by a lot of your regiment. We couldn't shoot, because you were in the way, and we couldn't shoot you when you had surrendered."

"Well, there's some consolation, after all," said Si, more cheerfully. "We wasn't wasted, anyhow, if we saved a lot of the boys an' the colors. I was afeared the colors was layin' back there in the brush with a pile o' dead men around them. I'd rather be took myself than have you git our colors."

"Fact is," said a rebel Sergeant, standing near, "Cap here, who's done bin in command o' the riji-mint sence the Cunnel an' Majah war killed, war good-humored, an' done stopped we'uns's shootin', or we'uns 'd've killed a powerful sight more o' yo'uns. Fact is, we'uns 'd all done got tired o' shootin' yo'uns down. Hit war too darned easy—jist like a rabbit-drive. We'uns didn't lose a man, an' yo'uns had no more show than wild turkeys in a pen."

"Yes," added the Captain, "old Sherman must've had one of his crazy fits again when he jammed you up against such works as we have here. We couldn't be fixed better to receive you. I haven't lost a man. Sherman must certainly be crazy."

"Well," said Shorty, irritated by their elation over their victory, "for a crazy man he gets away with your smart man Johnston in great shape right along. He's skinned him out o' nearly the whole o' north Georgia, an' we've bin grabbin' about a County a day away from you, in spite o' your mountains an' your big forts, an' your dumb abatis. We've hunted you out o' your holes like a lot o' woodchucks,

an' Sherman 'll keep it up till he runs you into the Atlantic Ocean. He's just crazy enough to waltz all around you every day in the week."

"O, Johnston's just drawing Sherman on," said the Captain. "He's just drawing him back like the Russians did Napoleon at Moscow. Every time we fall back we get stronger, and Sherman gets weaker. When we start back at him we'll grind him to pieces, and it will be a dead run to the Ohio River, and mighty few of his men will ever get there. You're lucky to be taken in before the rush begins. All of Sherman's army that's left alive will soon join you."

"Drawin' us on," said Si hotly. "Yes, you're drawin' us on just like you was doin' at Tullyhomy and Chattanooga. You thought you was goin' to smash us at Chickamaugy, with all the help you could git from Lee's army an' the prisoners we paroled at Vicksburg. You're drawin' us on just like you drawed us on at Mission Ridge. Just like you drawed us on at Buzzard Roost. You put me in mind of a man out on the Wabash who thought he'd break a steer calf to the yoke. He put the calf's neck into one bow, an' his own into the other. He said afterward that the calf hadn't made more'n two jumps before he knowed that he'd made a mistake, and as they went tearin' down the road he was yellin', 'Stop us; somebody stop us, for the Lord's sake, before we break our dumb fool necks.' "

"Yes," echoed Shorty, "you're drawin' us on like the man brought the bear into camp."

The downcast boys began to perk up when they saw the confident front that Si and Shorty presented to their enemies.

"Well, you're good stuff," laughed the Captain. "Sergeant, take them to the rear, and find them something to eat. I expect they are very hungry. Treat them well, for they are brave men."

"Thank you, Captain," said Si, saluting. "Here's hopin' we may have the pleasure of taking you prisoner some day, and returning the compliment."

For the moment curiosity overpowered every other emotion in Si's mind as he was being taken to the rear of the rebel army. Here, at last, he was in the very midst of the enemies with whom he had been battling for two long years, and could see them at home. How very like, and yet how very unlike it all was to our army. There were the same great masses of men in regiments, brigades, and divisions, the same imposing array of artillery, the same great herds of animals, countless horses and wagons, the same incessant movements of teams and men; yet it all seemed a crude, almost barbarous imitation of the Union army. The wagons were generally clumsy affairs, which would not have been tolerated on Deacon Klegg's farm, and the animals such as he would not have wasted his time raising. Some of the artillery was drawn by oxen, which excited Si's and Shorty's risibles. Occasionally an officer was seen in a stylish uniform, but, dirty and shabby as the Union uniforms had seemed, the dingy, ragged, patched butternut in which the rebels were clothed seemed infinitely shabbier and dirtier. Only the guns were comparable with those of the Union army. The muskets were excellent Enfields, and the piles of boxes of bright new ammunition

that they passed bore English marks. The cannon also seemed of the same quality as our own.

"Stop here," said the Sergeant, whose name was Smoots, halting them some distance back. "I'll git yo'uns some grub from our Commissary. Yo'uns had better make the most of hit, for yo'uns won't be likely ter fare very well when yo'uns git back thar among them Jawgy Preserves. They'uns's the measliest lot o' scalawags that ever et clay, an' hain't no sort o' sense about sojerin'. Yo'uns want ter hide everything from 'em, fer they'uns 'll rob yo'uns of everything they kin grab. Look out fur 'em every minnit."

Sergeant Smoots presently returned with a "poke" containing about a peck of cornmeal and a side of meat, which he handed to Si, remarking:

"Thar, you'd better keep all o' that, an' take mouty good ker of hit, fer grub's likely ter be skeerce with yo'uns fer awhile. Stay right here an' cook your vittels; I've spoke ter the Provost Sargint, who's standin' right over thar, an' turned yo'uns over ter him. Yo'uns can't git away, so you needn't waste time a-tryin'. When the Sargint gits orders ter move he'll gether yo'uns in. I want ter do all I kin fer yo'uns, kase yo'uns captured my brother an' a lot o' our boys at Tullyhomy, an' yo'uns treated 'em mouty white. But I must git bak ter the rijimint. Good day."

"Purty white man, that, fur a rebel," said Si, as he began examining the provisions. "This looks like tolerable grub for hungry men, but how are we goin' to cook it? We hain't so much as a tin cup with us. Wonder where we kin get some pans or something?"

The man who had been indicated as the Provost Sergeant strolled by and gave them a savagely critical look.

"Here, Sergeant," said Si, appealingly to him, "what're we goin' to cook our rations in? Can't you give us pans and kittles?"

"Cook your grub as you please," said the Sergeant sourly. "You infernal Yankees orter be mouty glad ter git grub at all. If I had my way you'd git blamed little."

"But we can't eat this stuff raw, Sergeant," expostulated Si, beginning to feel for the first time the keenness of the situation. "We hain't nothin' with us. We had to pile all our things when we started on the charge."

"Serves you right for startin' on the charge," said the Sergeant with an oath. "What are yo'uns down heah fightin' we'uns for, anyhow? Hit's God's mercy that you wasn't killed on the charge with the rest of 'em, as you'uns orter've bin. Eat your grub raw, an' be blamed glad you've got hit ter eat. Better men than you have had ter do hit."

"Nice way, that, to talk to prisoners, you bomb-proofer," said Shorty scornfully. "I'll bet my head you never was in a fight in your life."

"Shet up, or I'll break yer Yankee jaw," said the Sergeant, striding up menacingly.

"You will, will you?" responded Shorty, putting himself in a posture of defense. "Just try that little game, won't you? Just balance up to me, sonny. Here's that says I kin knock that rebel head offen you with neatness and dispatch. You're one o' them fellers that said one rebel could whip six Yankees,

I s'pose. Just tackle this one, if you want to be measured for an early grave an' a military funeral. Don't be modest, bub. Come forward to the mourner's bench."

The Sergeant was evidently not popular with the crowd of rebel soldiers who flocked around, attracted by the noise of the dispute. They jeered at him, and urged him to accept Shorty's invitation.

"Sail into him, Buck," they yelled. "Sail in. You're so fond o' knockin' sick an' drunk prisoners aroun'. Thar's one that wants yo' ter knock him. He's plumb sassy about it. Jump him. Knock the stuffin' out o' the Yankee."

But there was something in the knowing way that Shorty moved his ponderous fists that discouraged the Sergeant.

"Here, you stragglin' hounds," he said savagely to the crowd around him, "what air yo'uns doin' away from yo' camps? Git back ter yo' rijimints, afore I chuck every one o' yo' in the gyardhouse. Skip, now, or I'll call out the gyard, and arrest every last one o' you."

The crowd scattered, and turning to the prisoners, the Sergeant said:

"Heah, yo' Yanks, yo're layin' out heah too fur. Pick up an' move up ter whar them other prisoners air, an' do hit right smart. Git, now, or I'll done help yo' in a way yo' won't like."

Repressing himself with an effort from hot words of resentment, which leaped to his lips, Si picked up his poke of meal and side of bacon, and moved up the hill, to where some hundreds of other prisoners captured in the assault were collected.

More were brought in in small squads. As each came up it was eagerly scanned by those already there, for acquaintances, and the new arrivals as eagerly looked through the crowd for missing ones. There were many happy recognitions of comrades who were feared to have been killed, much delighted handshakings, and such tears of joy over escapes of dear friends from what seemed to be certain death, that for the moment the gloom of capture was illuminated by the joy of having passed scatheless through such mortal peril.

Si took the opportunity of looking over his squad to see how they had passed through the fiery ordeal. His and Shorty's face and hands were covered with blood, now drying to crusts. It was the same with the other boys. Careful examination revealed, however, that nobody had received any serious hurts. Their struggles with the abatis were responsible for many deep gashes on their faces and hands. Twigs and splinters torn from the trees and driven with stinging force against them were the cause of others, and they all felt as raw and inflamed as if beaten with many stripes. A bullet had clipped off a bit of Pete Skidmore's ear, a piece of shell had torn out a bit of Harry Joslyn's pantaloons, a canister-ball had raised a welt on Gid Mackall's thigh, and each one of them seemed to have been grazed somewhere by the storm of missiles, yet none had received what would be regarded as an actual wound. But how sore every one felt as the excitement subsided, and their blood cooled.

"I feel worse'n if the teacher'd bin hickorying me for a straight hour," murmured little Pete, with

tears in his eyes, as he felt all over himself gingerly. "Every spot on me, from head to foot, feels sore'n a bile."

"So do I," echoed the rest.

"Well," said Si, reverently, "let us thank God that we escaped as well as we did. God Himself must have protected us, or we'd never got through, as so many of our boys are now layin' over there in the brush lookin' up at the angels. We're prisoners, to be sure, but it might have bin worse. Let's make the best of it. We'll git out o' this somehow, just as we got out o' the other. There'll be some chance to git away, or else Uncle Billy'll come along presently an' let us out."

"The rebels'll have to be a heap sight smarter'n I've ever knowed any man that wore butternut to be if they keep us a week," said Shorty. "Chirk up, boys. We'll find some way to git out o' this scrap before we're a week older, or my name ain't Shorty. Come, Pete, let's go over to that branch there and wash up. We'll feel better then."

The others did the same. The water at once revived them, and made their hurts smart more keenly. And they became at once exceedingly hungry.

"How in the name o' sin are we goin' to cook this blamed stuff?" Si asked Shorty, looking at his poke of meal and side of meat with puzzled eyes, as the boys mentioned their raving appetite. "The boys can't eat this meal raw. It'd likely kill 'em with the colic if they did."

"I noticed some o' 'em over there," said Shorty, "baking their meal hoe-cake style on pieces o' sheet-

iron and chips set up before the fire. I think some o' them smooth flat stones over there will be just the things. Pete, go over there to the branch an' pick up some o' them flat rocks and wash the dirt offen 'em. I'll look around for something to mix the dough in."

Across the branch he noticed an old buckeye sugar-trough, which some teamster had used for his feed-trough. Some others had seen it and its availability at the same time, and made a rush for it, but Shorty's long legs gained the prize. He took it to the branch, washed it out, and brought it back with some water in it with which to mix the dough.

"What are we goin' to do for salt?" asked Si, as he whittled out a paddle with which to do the mixing.

"We'll have to do without till I kin beg, buy or steal some," said Shorty. "Mix her up. I'm hungry enough to eat the meal raw. The necessaries o' life we must have; the luxuries we kin do without. Salt's a luxury, just now."

Si mixed up the dough and spread it upon the flat thin stones, each about the size of a large-sized dinner plate, and one for each boy.

"That idee o' your'n about these shell-rocks, Shorty, was a great one," said Si, as he finished. "They'll do very nicely. I don't know how we'd've got along without 'em. Now, boys, each o' you take one o' these and prop it carefully before the fire, where the heat'll strike it fair, and keep it there till the crust is done brown, and then scrape it off and turn the other side and bake it, and you'll have a nice hoe-cake."

They did as directed, and each one sat behind his

stone watching with hungry eagerness the effect of the heat upon it. The first flush of brown was just appearing when crack, crack! went each of the



CRACK WENT THE STONES.

stones, with a sharp report, as they flew into pieces, scattering the dough upon them into the fire and all around.

“Confound it, Shorty,” said Si, with the irritating

injustice of a hungry man, as he fished some portions of the dough out of the fire, "you ought to've knowed that them wet rocks would bust just as soon's they got hot. You and Thompson's colt must've bin twins."

"Shet your gab," said Shorty, with equal irritation, as he also fished out such dough as he could recover, and fixed little balls of it on twigs, to hold over the coals. "Who are you slurring at? You didn't know no more about it than I did."

With their bread baked in this way, and meat broiled on the end of sticks, they made their first meal inside the rebel lines.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE TRAIN FOR ANDERSONVILLE.

“**F**ALL in, all you Yanks, an’ git aboard that train thar,” shouted the rebel Provost Sergeant, as the boys were swallowing their balls of scorched corn dough and pieces of meat.

In obedience to the command, the men farther off on the right began moving down toward the train, about which was mustered a regiment of “Georgia Militia,” or “Reserves,” to guard them back to Atlanta and Andersonville.

The appearance of these was the most astonishing to Si of anything that he had yet seen in the rebel army. Dirty, ragged and tattered as scarecrows as the regular rebel soldiers seemed, there was yet something soldierly about them, especially when seen in line and in masses. They were well-drilled, they handled their guns as if familiar with them, and they moved about with alertness and precision. If there was a difference, the Reserves were much better dressed. They had but recently come out, and their dingy, uncouth, home-made garments were in much better repair. They were of all ages and sizes, from the tall, bent form, with whitening hair and seamed, wrinkled face of the grandfather, to the slouching, ill-knit, gangling grandson, with his vacant face and staring, goggle eyes. The gray-haired men were

plentiful, but far more numerous were the boys of 16 and under, who leaned on their guns and stared with eyes and mouths wide open on the prisoners, the first they had seen. There was both wonder and fear in their looks. These were "the Yankees," of whom they had been hearing ever since they could remember—the wild, ferocious, cunning, cowardly, merciless, tricky, savage monsters, with all sorts of vile tastes and propensities, stories of whom had filled their minds to the exclusion of tales of Indians, catamounts, bears, "painters," hoopsnakes, and other "sarpints," upon traditions of which their fathers and grandfathers had been reared.

Two or three of the bolder of them had left their company, and timorously ventured down to where they could devour Si and his squad with their eyes, at close range.

"Say, bub, got any terbacker that you'll"—began Shorty, stepping out toward them in a friendly way; but he was interrupted by a wild yell of fear from the boys, who scudded back to where they had left their guns, snatched them up, and leveled them offensively and defensively.

Rebel soldiers standing near laughed uproariously.

"Say, boys," shouted one. "Don't be skeered outen a year's growth. Them Yanks is tame. They'uns won't hurt yo'uns. Hit's only wild ones, like them out in front, as is dangersome. They hain't no horns. Go up and talk to 'em. They'uns won't bite you. See here."

He walked up to Shorty and said:

"Say, Yank, that head kiver'n' is too good fer a Yank. Reckon I'll trade with you, fer I sho'ly need a better one than I've got."

When they had started, Shorty had with provident forethought picked up the sugar trough, thinking that he might have future use for it. He was so cumbered with this that the rebel succeeded in getting away with his hat before he could drop the trough and strike him. The rebel disappeared in the laughing crowd, who thought it a good joke. Shorty swore a blue streak, but his hat was gone.



“I’LL DONE GIVE THIS HAT O’ MINE AN’ A HALF-
PLUG O’ TERBACKER TO BOOT.”

This was a signal for the other rebel soldiers, hanging around, and soon every hat in the squad was gone.

One of the more honestly-disposed had said to Si:

“Say, Yank, you’re a-gwine ter lose yer hat, anyhow. Yer kaint git ter keep hit long, nowhow, so y’d better swap with me now. I’ll done gin this hyah one o’ mine, an’ a half-plug o’ terbacker ter boot.”

He produced the tobacco, and held out his hat,

while Si kept a firm hold of his own. Si looked curiously and somewhat disdainfully at that of the rebel. It was a heavy, excessively clumsy affair, made by sewing together tufts of the long-leaved pine.

"Looks like a cross between a door-mat an' a hay-cock," said Si, "but I expect I'd better trade, as I want the terbacker. Here, take it."

The sun was pouring down burning rays, and seeing Si set the example, Harry Joslyn picked up another pine leaf hat which had been thrown at his feet, and after beating it on the ground to dislodge any occupants, put it on. Gid Mackall and Monty Scruggs did the same.

"Blamed if I'm goin' to put on any o' their dirty rags," said Shorty, turning the sugar-trough over and putting it on his head. "I never saw one o' their hats yit that I'd more'n tetch with the pint o' my bayonet. I'm goin' to make this do until I git something better."

As they drew nearer the train, Si looked over the reserves more carefully. He found a number of middle-aged men among them, who had so far escaped conscription. Some had but one eye; some were manifestly very hard of hearing; some wheezed with the asthma; some halted badly in their steps.

"What's this we've struck?" Shorty inquired from beneath his sugar-trough. "Is this the emptyin's of the rebel asylum for orphans and idiots, the home for incurables an' the old men's wards of the poor-houses?"

"It certainly looks like it," answered Si. "And them officers look like Township Trustees, come out on parade with the lame and halt paupers. And see

them guns. They're young cannon, mounted on handspikes for stocks."

The ancient guns with which the Georgia Reserves were armed were old "Queen Anne muskets" that had been furnished the Colony in the French and Indian wars, and since preserved in the Georgia armory, where, after being altered to percussion locks, they were issued in 1864 to the "Goober Militia." They had an enormous bore; were very rough and clumsy in construction, and the boys and weaker men bent under their weight.

The bellowing report of one of the guns a little farther up the line attracted all attention. One of the Reserves, a loose-jointed, gawky boy, with an evil, lowering look, had been inspired by the example of the rebel veterans, to run down to the line and snatch a fine hat from the head of an Ohio soldier, who ran shouting after him, trying to recover it. The boy sprang to his gun, snatched it up, whirled and fired with incredible swiftness. The heavy charge tore through the Ohio's boy's breast, and he fell a bloody corpse. The Reserves ran to their guns, and it looked for an instant as if they would open an indiscriminate fusillade upon the prisoners. The Colonel of the Reserves, a large, pompous man, with a bull-like voice, shouted:

"Hold on, thar, men. Don't shoot no more onless they make a rush, or you git ordehs. That thar man got jest what he desarved, but don't shoot no more onless hit's needed. Let that be a lesson to 'em, which mebbe they'll heed. You Yanks stand right whar you air. Don't you move a step till I gin the ordeh, or I'll mallaroo you offen the face o' the airth."

In the impotence of his rage Shorty swore himself hoarse, and made all manner of imprecations and threats against the Colonel and the murdering boy.

"I'm goin' to wipe every other name off my scoundrel-book, except them two," he yelled. "I'll foller them as long as I live till I kill both of 'em, the murderin' villains."

Si said less, but he meant quite as much. The order came for them to march down and get on the cars. These were the cars in which cattle had been hauled up to Johnston's Army, and were indescribably filthy. Si glanced at them, and momentarily hesitated to get in, but the Reserves were closing down, and he divined what refusal might mean to him and the rest.

"Captain Smoots," roared Colonel Tate, of the Reserves, "you'll take charge o' the rear end o' the train with your company. I'll hold you responsible fer the last three kyars. Put four o' your men at the door of each kyar, and the rest on top. Don't stand no foolishness from them Yanks. You got guns and bayonets, and you knows what they're fer. Don't stand a minut's foolishness from ary one o' them whelps. Ef he gives you any lip, or don't mind your ordehs, or makes a motion ter git away, sock a bayonet into him, or give him a load o' buckshot, and quiet him. They all oughter be killed. Hit's a mercy that we let any of them live at all."

"Listen to the bomb-proofer beller," snapped Shorty. "These are the first Yankees he's ever seen."

"Shet yer mouth an' git inter the kyar, afore I blow yer head off," said Captain Smoots, putting his hand on his big pepper-box revolver.

Handing their things to the other boys to hold, Si

and Shorty picked up an old tie on which to sit, and climbed into the car with it. They wanted to place it across the car, so that they could look out of the door, but were compelled to put it lengthwise, and they so arranged it that they could lean back against the side of the car. Other prisoners were crowded in as long as there seemed standing room. Finally four guards got in, looking very nervous and excited at their close companionship with the Yankees, but being assured that they had a strong reinforcement, should anything happen, in the squads, mounted to the roof and lay down there. Captain Smoots walked up and down, superintending the car, in compliance with orders bawled by Colonel Tate, and adding his own loud voice to the din. He was a red-faced, fussy, important man, and clearly felt that this was the biggest job that had ever been given him. His homespun coat, ornamented with big horn buttons, was buttoned to his chin, in severely military style, and beside the big pepper-box revolver in a holster on his belt, he had an old-fashioned broad-bladed sword, with a fancy, curved hilt, such as had been worn earlier in the century by an officer of the militia. He was perspiring freely, from the heat of the day, added to his boiling feeling of importance, and in the intervals between issuing his orders he mopped his blazing face with a large, yellow bandanna. When he had gotten all in, he wanted to climb to the top of the car, but that was too nimble a task for his girth and stiffness. He decided to get into the car where Si and Shorty were, so called a negro, who piled up ties to make steps, and placed a box inside the car for him to sit on. Then the Captain got in, glared around

with official severity, to impress every one that he was not to be trifled with for an instant, and seated himself stiffly, with one hand on the hilt of his antique sword and the other on the handle of his almost as antique revolver.

The train pulled out, and Si and Shorty craned their necks to get a view of the country, and what further obstacles the army was likely to encounter in its advance upon Atlanta. But Captain Smoots sternly ordered them back to their places, and made those standing near turn their faces inward.

“Hain’t a-gwine ter have you spyin’ out the kentry fer your army, an’ sendin’ the news back,” he said. “You Yanks is jest too sneakin’ cunnin’ ter live. Mebbe some o’ you done got tuck a purpose ter have a chanst ter spy out the land fer ole Sherman—rot ’im. He’s the meanest white man alive—ef he is white, which I misdoubt. Staid down in Loozyany ’mong us till he got all the infermation he could an’ then sneaked off an’ jined the Yankees.”

A shot, followed by a scattering fusillade, rang out from the top of a forward car, and produced great excitement. The train was passing through a shallow cut, where the brush came close to the edge of the bank. A daring man had made a bold dash for liberty by suddenly jumping past the guard and up on to the bank. But there he was caught by a charge of buckshot from one of the guards on the roof, and fell, while the others emptied their guns at him. As the train ran on his mangled body could be plainly seen from the car. This had a deterring effect upon Si and Shorty, who had been contemplating, when the train should pass near the woods,

making a rush, toppling over the Captain and his guards, and getting into the cover of the brush.

"Them spavined idiots mayn't know anything else," Shorty whispered to Si, "but they kin shoot, an' are mighty quick on the trigger. Guess we'll have to give it up. Even if we could git away, they'll kill some o' the boys."

The train pounded on monotonously for hours; there was no further incident; the day was broiling hot; the stench was stifling, and the Captain's dignity began to sit heavily upon him. He relaxed his grip on his sword-hilt in order to ply his bandanna, and then let go the handle of his revolver. Presently his fat, coarse face showed unmistakable signs of general tiredness with the whole business. Nobody had spoken a word for a long time or done anything to call forth stern warnings. Si thought he would open up a conversation, and something might develop.

"Mighty hot day, Captain, an' guard dooty's hard work," he ventured in a friendly tone.

The Captain started, scowled for a moment at the thought of a possible derogation to his dignity in having a neighborly remark addressed to him by a prisoner, and then answered curtly:

"Silence in the coah't." Then, remembering himself, he added: "Who gave you lief, sah, ter speak ter me?"

"Nobody," Si answered pleasantly. "My tongue got tired layin' on one side, an' I thought I'd turn it over. I heard them call you Captain Smoots. We have a Judge Smoots up in our country."

"A Judge, did you say?" said the Captain, a little

mollified. "Probably some kin. The Smoots all take nacherully ter the law."

"You resemble him," continued Si. "I noticed it when I first seen you. Are you on the bench?"

"I've done bin Justice o' the Peace an' Magistrate o' the Oconee District for 11 years hand-runnin' now," answered the Captain, swelling up. "One o' my Constables is with me as Fust Lootenant, an' t'other is Second Lootenant. If I live through this war I expect to be Ordinary o' my County."

"O, you'll live," Si assured him. "You ain't the kind to die or git killed (when thar's a big office in sight)," he added under his breath.

"O, he'll live," echoed Shorty, *sotto voce*. "Unless he breaks a blood vessel running away from our cavalry."

"Your voice reminds me o' Judge Smoot's," pursued Si. "Now, the Judge"——

"A great many call me Judge," interrupted the Captain, "though I'm not really entitled to hit till I'm an Ordinary, or what some folks calls a Probate Judge. But I've bin so long a Magistrate, and decided so many important cases, that I'm often called Judge. I've had afore me some o' the weightiest cases that ever come up in Jawgy. I've tried two men that was afterwards hung. I've"——

He stopped, looked around him and rose. He saw an audience larger than he had ever addressed, and one which could not get away from him. He could get off his favorite speech where it would do the most good, by impressing alien enemies with the greatness and intelligence of Georgia and her people. He inflated his chest, and put on the most judicial air.

• “I tell you,” he began, pompously, and then hesitated, as for the next word. His auditors were not fellow-citizens, and he would not dignify them by calling them gentlemen. He got out of the dilemma by fixing his eye on Si, as if he was a prisoner at the bar, and beginning again:

“I tell you, sah, the State o’ Jawgy’s the greatest State in the universe, sah. Hit’s the largest State in our glorious Southland, except Texas, which is mostly cactus desert, an’ has mo’ happier, intelligentier people, sah, nor ary other on airth. Hit’s people air brave men and beautiful women, an’ they air now foutin’ with glorious courage a great war agin the swarmin’ hordes of wicked an’ merciless depotism, which is tryin’ ter reduce us ter slavery—make niggers of we’uns. But the people of Jawgy air too brave an’ free ter ever be conquered. They’re the gran’est people on airth, sah. They have the best Gov’ment an’ the best laws, an’ the wisest an’ best Judges. The Jawgy judiciary has no equals anywhar. I as a member of hit kin say”——

He hesitated for breath and words and Si put in:

“That’s jest what I was thinkin’ about you. I know you understand the law, an’ that you’re a first-class ’Squire (“that is,” he saved his conscience, a reservation under his breath, “you’re first-class for a country that thinks such as you first-class).”

“That’s equal to saying that he’s respectable for hell,” inwardly commented Shorty.

“An’ knowin’ you know the law,” continued Si, “I wanted your honest opinion of sich a cold-blooded murder as that back there of that boy who was tryin’ to git his stolen hat. Ain’t that something that

Injuns orter to be ashamed of? Is there anything in military law, or any other kind"——

The Captain's red face grew purple as he gathered Si's meaning, conveyed in words that had sounded so fair at first. He clutched the hilt of his sword and stood up, and gasped for a moment for words severe enough.

"You onhung villain," he shouted; "you come down heah ter murder our people, an' then abuse an' slander 'em. You hain't no right ter speak ter me that way or at all. Hit's contempt o' coacht an' agin military discipline. That air man wuz rightfully shot. He desarved hit. Hit wuz a case o' self-defense, as plain as I ever seed. The Yankee wuz attackin' the boy—hit wuz criminal assault, an' the boy shot ter defend hisself. I'd a' cleared him in a minnit if hit'd come afore my coacht. Set back thar in youh place, an' don't you dar open youh sassy head agin, or I'll split hit with my swo'd."

"Another name for my scoundrel-book," muttered Shorty. "That makes three blue ribboners—first prizes—that I've got to settle with."

Si, having had his say, leaned back against the car, and remained silent.

The Captain sank back upon his box and glared awhile at Si. Then his eyes traveled down to Si's feet, and an idea struck him. "Put out yo' foot," he ordered. Si had only drawn shoes the day before. Si knew what was coming, but there was no help for it. He extended his foot.

"Them's mouty good shoes you got on, an' they're jest my size. You hain't no right to sich good shoes, when better men than you, who air foutin' fer their

kentry, have ter go barefooted. Take 'em off an' give 'em ter me."

Si hesitated a moment, but he saw the folly of resistance. The guards handled their guns as if ready to use them at the least sign of resistance. With a wry face he untied his shoes and handed them over.

"That gives me an idee," said the Captain. The train had stopped on a switch. "I kin pervide my whole company with good shoes. Lootenant Bets, Lootenant Bets," he called.

"Here I am. What's wanted, 'Squire—I mean, Captain," answered the ex-Constable, coming up.

"I command you, in the name o' the State o' Jawgy," said the Captain, forgetting the officer in the 'Squire, "to take a sufficient posse o' men an' go through these kyars and seize, impress, distrain and replevin all sich good an' suitable shoes as you may find on the prisoners there confined, for the use an' benefit o' the men o' this company, an' fer so doin' this order shall be your warrant. Fail not on your peril."

"All right, 'Squire; I'll make return o' the goods an' chattels ter you, right off," answered the Lieutenant.

"You remind me more o' Judge Smoots every minnit," Si could not forbear saying. "He's the meanest, orneriest, rum-suckin' politician in our whole County, and never was Judge o' anything but whisky and hoss races."

The Captain looked as if he would murder him, but Si felt that fate had done its worst in taking away his shoes.

The train rolled on, and finally came to Atlanta,

but the most the boys could see of the great objective of Sherman's Army was a wide spread of railroad switches, incumbered with freight trains carrying supplies to Johnston's army; other trains carrying men to the front, or bringing wounded back, and a row of dismantled locomotives, from which pieces were taken daily to supply those broken upon the engines still in active service. The train stopped there awhile, and then rumbled on.

An hour or two south of Atlanta the train had to stop at a bridge which our cavalry had destroyed. The hasty structure which replaced it was still in shaky condition, and it was decided to wait a little until the workmen could strengthen it so as to risk the engine upon it. The prisoners would be taken out, and the cars pushed by hand. After the prisoners marched across to the other bank, and while waiting for completion of the work, they built little fires, and began trying to cook what scanty rations they had to appease their raging hunger. Our cavalry had thrown a freight train from the track, and partially burned it. An expedient occurred to the ingenious Sandy Baker. He held a strip of the tin roof over the fire until the solder at the joints was melted, and thus supplied each one of the squad with a sheet-iron plate upon which to bake his bread. With a spike for a chisel and a bolt for a hammer, he turned up other pieces into pans. The Reserves had by this time become somewhat accustomed to the presence of the Yankees, and not so nervous, so they allowed Shorty to go down to the creek, under close guard, where he washed out his trough, and came back with enough water in it to mix the meal. The boys all got satisfactory hoe-cakes, which they

sopped in the grease fried out in one of Sandy Baker's pans, and made a better meal than they had expected. Shorty, finding his bare feet hurt by the stones and the prickly pear which abounded on the banks of the creek, made a virtue of necessity, and picked up a pair of old shoes thrown aside by one who had been benefited by Captain Smoot's confiscation. They were badly dilapidated, and the soles were coming apart, but Shorty bound them together with strips of paw-paw bark until they would stay on. While the boys were eating, and Captain Smoots was standing in rigid superintendence of the crowd, Colonel Tate strolled up, and after complimenting the Captain upon his success in getting the prisoners so far, remarked in a gossipy way:

"They tell me, Captain, that you've done sold your boy Bounce?"

"Yes," answered the Captain; "niggers is resky property jest now, an' Bounce is a resky nigger. He's young an' a tolluble hand, but thar's no tellin' what night he mout take hit inter his head ter walk over ter Sherman or foller off the Yankee cavalry. So I let Nate Shrawn have him fur a mere nothin', so ter speak—\$500 in money, a yok o' likely steers, a fresh cow, and his ole mare. I don't know as I've bettered myself much, fo' the \$500 won't buy a heap nowadays, an' the Confedrit Gover'mint is likely ter impress the cattle fer Johnston's army. But I didn't like the look I sometimes seed in Bounce's eyes, an' I thought I mout as well git something fer him while I could. Let Nate lay awake nights now, thinkin' 'bout him, I'm done tired of hit. Nate done seed me in Atlanty, an' gin me the money, so hit's a sale."

"I reckon you've done made a good bargain, Cap-

tain," answered the Colonel. "Niggers is a good thing ter git shet of now, if yo' kin git anything at all fo' them. They're 'bout the onlikeliest property that a man kin have, an' are gittin' onlikelier every day. If we can't drive Sherman back they won't be wuth nothin' at all. Your cattle yo' kin hide from the impressin' agent, especially if yo' don't let nobody know yo' have 'em. That's probably what made Nate willin' ter trade. Everybody knowed he had 'em. He kin take Bounce down inter the country, an' work on a contract. I wish't somebody'd come along an' trade me cattle for some o' my niggers. He could have 'em at a bargain. We've got ter make sacrifices fer the kentry, an' I'd sacrifice 'em."

A gleam came into Shorty's eyes, and a look of resolve into his face, as he overheard about the Captain having received the money at Atlanta.

"It's money that he received for human flesh and blood, and it'll be all right to take it," he muttered to himself. "Besides, it'll pay him up for stealin' our shoes. I don't believe that even Maria or the Deacon would say a word agin it."

The prisoners were put back into the cars, and the journey resumed. Shorty took his seat on the end of the tie next to the Captain. The night came on as they passed Macon, but there was no abatement of the heat. Si was still meditating plans of escape, but none suggested themselves which seemed feasible. He was in hopes that darkness would bring something, but the moon rose clearly.

The Captain, anxious to get the draft, had shifted himself over to the side of the car, where the air made by the motion of the train would strike him full

in the face. He sat on his box, and leaned his head against the side of the door. His dignity had melted away considerably since the morning, and he at last unbuttoned his coat, that the cooling breeze might strike his fevered breast. In spite of himself, his eyes would close in cat-naps, from which he would rouse himself and look sternly at the guards and the prisoners. Presently Shorty could hear his snoring mingling with the rumbling of the train. Shorty rose and took off Si's big pine-leaf hat, which he held in both hands, and edged around the Captain as if trying to get near the door as possible. Others were doing the same, in the tired, restless movement of men kept on their feet without an opportunity to sit down for hours. From time to time the guards would make them stand back. Shorty held the hat in his left hand, and under its cover slipped his right down in the Captain's breast as softly and carefully as if lifting a butterfly from a flower, without hurting its gauzy wings. He touched a leather wallet, and gently catching it between the nails of his forefinger and his second finger, without bending his hand, a trick which he had learned from an expert pickpocket in his gambling days, gently drew it out, behind the cover of the hat. Another large man had crowded in between him and the door, and the guard ordered him back. Shorty went back with him, made his way to a seat on the farthest end of the tie, handed the hat back to Si, and for hours seemed engaged in fixing up his shoes with the paw-paw strips he had brought with him.

The awful long, wearisome night finally ended as the train halted at a shabby little station which differed from the others they had been passing in

that poverty-stricken country since leaving Macon in having quite a show about it of camps, military appurtenances and soldiers.

"Hyah's Andersonville, 'Squire. Wake up," called the middle-aged, asthmatic guard, who was the only one really awake.

"I declar', I raylly believe I dropped off inter a little doze," exclaimed the Captain, rubbing his eyes and entirely unconscious that he had been sound asleep for hours. "I didn't inten' ter, but I wuz powerful hot an' tired. I only got about 40 winks, anyway."

The excitement of the arrival possessed him. He buttoned up his coat to his chin and assumed his sternest official air.

"Come down, up thar," he called to the men on the roof. "Git down, an' form a string out thar around these prisoners as they git off. Be spry, now, fo' we want ter turn these varmints over, an' git shet o' them."

CHAPTER IX.

THEY REACH ANDERSONVILLE.

WHEN Shorty started to get out of the car he looked around for the sugar-trough, but it was gone.

"Some smart Aleck has stole my hat, our dough-bowl, wash-basin an' stool, all at one lick," he said. "Got away with it while I was asleep. Durn a thief, anyway. But let him have it for awhile. He can't hide it, an'll just carry it for me, till I want it, when I'll take it away from him. I need my hands free for awhile, anyway. I may see something else that I want worse'n the sugar-trough."

When they were gathered on the ground by the side of the track, Shorty saw his trough on the head of a tall Irishman a little ways distant, and immediately tackled him.

"Here, that's my trough you're makin' a hat of. You stole it from me last night."

"G'wa wid ye," said the Irishman scornfully. "Tain't nothin' av the koind. It's me own. Oi picked it up back there beyant Marietty, an've had it all the toime. G'w'off now, an' get a trough av yer own, if yer want wan. Don't be thryin' to claim other payple's property, or Oi'll fix up yer oogly face fer yez, so Oi will."

"I'll see you later 'bout that," said Shorty, walking

back to his place with the other boys, who were astonished at the calmness with which he took the barefaced robbery. But Shorty had other ideas in mind.

"Le's move up toward the center of the line," said he to Si. "I want to shake this crowd at the left. I'm afraid they ain't honest."

Si, knowing that his partner had some motive, did as suggested, without asking any questions.

Capt. Smoots was in a condition of purple hysteria over getting his guards arrayed in proper shape, and securing all the prisoners for whom he was accountable. His company was in poor condition for early morning duty. The shock-headed boys were mostly asleep on the tops of the cars, and it was the sleep of youthful stupidity, which little short of an earthquake could break. The old men were coughing, sneezing, rubbing their aching bones, and lifting up their voices in quavering laments.

"Fer the Lawd's sake, men, do wake up an' git down an' make a string around the kyahs," pleaded Capt. Smoots, his unavailing anger at length breaking down into whining anxiety. "Git down, quick. You mustn't let one o' these hyah Yanks git away, 'deed you mustn't. He'll go ragin' and ravenin' over the kentry, like a plum wild hyena from a circus, burnin' houses an' stealin' chickens an' niggehs an' hosses, an' abusin' women, an' destroyin' everything. Don't let one of 'em git away no more'n you would a lynx. Git down, men, fer your lives."

His frame of mind was not improved by the admonitions yelled at him from Col. Tate, who, having drunk up all the whisky to be found the night before, was now in a corresponding temper.

"Sile Smoots, you Coweta County buffalo," he yelled, "what air yo' doin' thar with that Constable's posse that yo' call a comp'ny? Air yo' holdin' a vandoo, or gwine ter work the roads? Git that thar outfit o' your'n inter some sort o' line, even if yo' have ter back 'em up agin a rail fence ter do hit. An' do hit mouty quick, too. We kain't wait forever on them spavined ole steers ter git the rheumatism out o' their j'int's. Hustle around thar lively, I tell yo'."

"Bill Tate," shouted back the ex-Justice, "yo' jest keep yo' mouth shet, an' 'tend ter yo' business an' I'll 'tend ter mine. Yo' don't know no more 'bout military nor I do, yo' ole niggeh-trader, if yo' wuz at the firin' on Fort Sumter. Yo' look out fer them other companies. They've wuss behind 'an I am. I'll have mine out afore 'em. Yo' kain't cuss me 'round as if I wuz yo' niggeh. I won't stand hit. I'm a better born, respectabler man than yo' ever dared be, in spite o' the airs yo're puttin' on."

Then the Captain turned his anger on his own company.

"Fo the Lawd's sake, Ans Williams, don't move them splay-feet o' yo'rn as if they done tuck root every time yo' set 'em down. Nat Greene, don't tell me yo're nigh dead with the rheumatics on sich a brilin' hot day as this. Tain't in reason. Pete Wilerby, wake up, thar. Yo' hain't got but one eye, an' don't need half as much sleep as ary other man. Move yer stumps an' git over thar. Jim Hawks, yo' brat, open them gooseberry eyes o' yo'rn, an' shet that thar cave-hole in yer face. If yo' don't the flies 'll blow yer innards. Git over thar. Git over thar,

afore all these Yankees git away from yo' an' jest nacherally ruin an' malleroo the whole country."

It required barely an hour of vociferation and perspiration to get the prisoners off the train and fairly started toward the prison less than a mile away.

Si studied everything around with the deepest interest. Here was the infamous Andersonville, of which they had heard so much. The country from Macon south had been a dreary sandy plain, growing less inviting the farther they came. Occasional shallow streams cut the plain, meandering sluggishly through wide marshes filled with rank growths of cane and briars. Whatever scanty richness had been in the land had washed down into these marshes, which looked like the natural homes of venomous snakes and all manner of unclean things. The timber struck Si as the strangest of all. He had never seen but small stretches of such lean and hungry soil as now seemed of interminable extent, and these stretches were well-covered with scrub-oak in the North, and with cedars in Kentucky and Tennessee, and where there were no trees there were bushes and briars. But here, as far as the eye could reach in any direction, were gigantic, long-leaved pines, straight and slender as columns, without a branch or knot for 60 or 75 feet, and then terminating in a sparse crown of scraggly limbs. The trees stood 20 feet apart, and in the intervening space was nothing but a scanty wiry grass thinly covering the yellow sand. There was no shrubbery, no underbrush, no kindly little copses, as seen in other forests; no flowers or lush grass in the openings. No coverts or wild fruits for birds or wild animals. No nut trees for frisking squirrels. No fragrant blossoms for the

bees. No plums, cherries, grapes, nor luscious berries on plant, vine or shrub. The stunted, ragged tops of the tall trees gave no more shade than a hay-rick; the parched, sterile sand as little nutriment for succulent herbage as a spent ash-heap. Miserable and shiftless as had seemed the farms and farmers in Kentucky and Tennessee, they were thrifty and comfortable compared to the squalid shacks, the starved fields, the hunger-smitten, shambling men and women and mangy animals of the Georgia pine-barrens. The men in the mountains were the descendants of parents who had at least energy and ability enough to fight Indians and hunt wild beasts. The South Georgia crackers were the progeny of the paupers and outcasts transported from England, and then driven off the plantations when it was found that the negros were more valuable field-workers. They had squatted anywhere and everywhere, and brought forth their kind like the beasts of the field, but lacked the enterprise of the wolves and the foxes, to migrate whither they could make a better living.

An extensive clearing had been made around the ramshackle little station at Andersonville, on the railroad built to connect the productive North Georgia country with navigable water in Appalachicola Bay. Part of the trees had been used to build sheds and cabins around the station for the supplies for the guards and prisoners, and quarters for the officers. If anything were drearier than the endless stretch of widely-separated, bare-trunked trees, it was that of the mangled stumps where trees had once been.

A creek with a swamp on either side crossed the

railroad near the station and flowed eastward. Along this were the camps of the thousands of the Georgia Reserves, who were guarding the prison. They had some white tents which gleamed hotly in the morning sun, but most of them were sheltered under rude shacks, constructed with the least possible labor and skill, from branches of the pine trees. Many, too lazy to build even these, simply lay around the roots of the pine trees. On the crest of the rising ground to the left, as they faced the prison, were interminable rows of little yellow mounds.

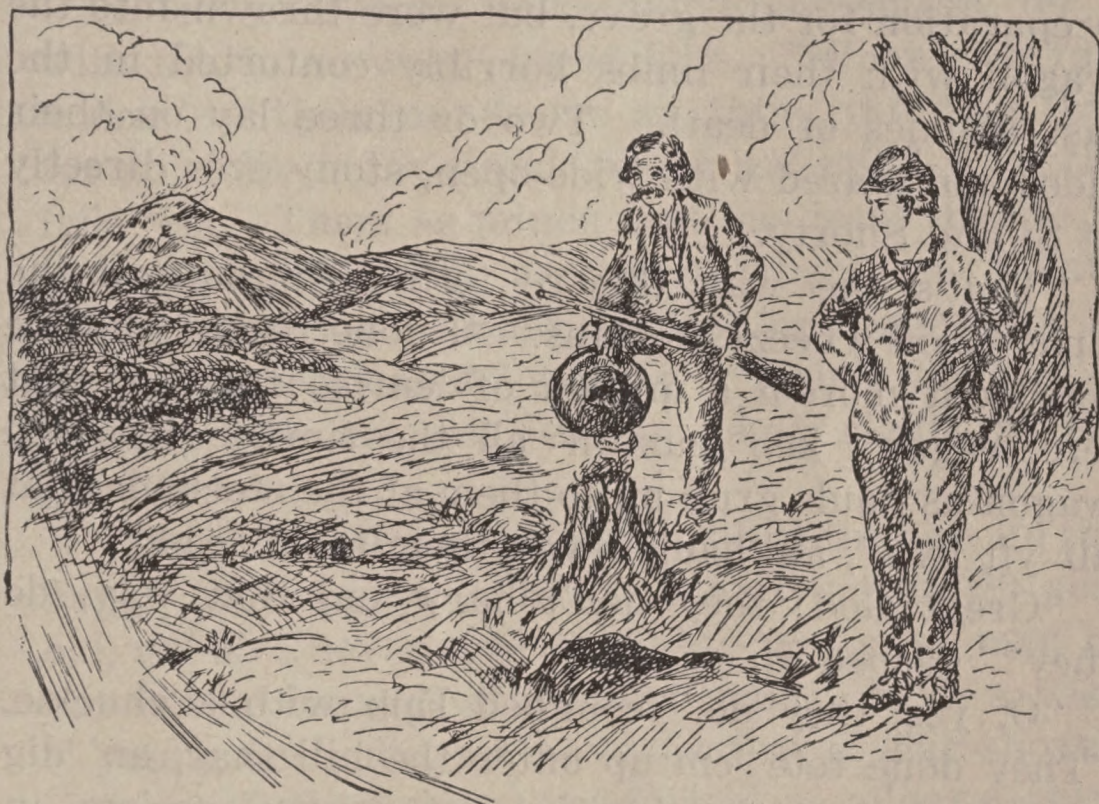
"That's the Yankee buryin' ground," wheezed asthmatic Eph Perkins, who had been there before with prisoners, as he noticed the direction of Si's gaze. "They're plantin' the Yanks powerful fast out thar. More'n a thousand a day, I've hearn tell."

Si shuddered, and turned his eyes on the great forts which crowned the slopes rising on either side from the creek, and the breastwork, facing from him, which connected them. Beyond this rose a high stockade of squared pine logs, deeply planted in the ground. At intervals around the top were little perches in which stood men with guns, guarding the walls overlooking the interior of the prison.

"Is that the awful place we've heard so much about?" Si asked Shorty. "It can't be so very terrible, if it's nothin' worse than layin' outdoors in sich weather as this. They'll certainly give us enough to eat, and we're used to layin' outdoors."

"O, they can't keep us there long," Shorty answered confidently. "There's some way o' beatin' these scarecrow guards, who hain't as much sense as nine-days'-old puppies. Even if we don't, Old Billy'll take Atlanty before the moon changes, an'

come down thru this country like a hurricane. When he once gits them fellers out o' the mountains, he'll run the stuffin' out o' them thru these pine openin's. It can't be near so bad in there as represented. At worst, it's only layin' outdoors, which hain't killin' in this kind o' weather."



"THAT'S THE YANKEE BURYIN' GROUND," WHEEZED
ASTHMATIC EPH PERKINS.

"I don't know about that," said Si, as they marched along. "Great God! look there, will you?"

A four-mule team came lumbering slowly along, drawing a wagon piled to its utmost with stiffened corpses. In all their long experience with every conceivable phase of the horrors of war they had never seen anything so ghastly. The naked, skinny arms and legs which protruded from the mass were

grimed with dirt, and wasted away to mere skeletons. All were nearly naked, which made their condition look far more horrible. Most of them had their great toes tied together with bits of string, and their hands folded on their breasts, on which were little bits of paper, containing their names, companies and regiments. Many had not even this much preparation for the grave, but were thrown into the wagon with their limbs horribly contorted in the last agonies of death. Two or three lay on their sides and glared with wide-open, stony eyes directly at Si and Shorty.

"That's the way they're totin' 'em out all the time," said wheezy Perkins. "I done reckon they've toted out more'n a million of 'em so fur, an' that 'ere wagon's kep' runnin' all the time. Hit's the wagon as hauls grub up to them at the stockade that air yit livin', an' hauls away them as is dead."

"Great God! they don't bury 'em that way, do they?" gasped Si.

"O, yes, they do," coughed Eph with a chuckle. "They done tote 'em up onter the hill thar, an' dig long ditches an' lay 'em in, jist as you see 'em, in long rows, longer'n corn rows. They've done got a right smart sized farm kivered with 'em already, an' hit's growin' bigger every day. A right smart heap air dyin' all the time."

"An' you rebels call yourselves Christians," said Si bitterly.

"I reckon we'uns hain't got nothin' ter do with hit," snuffled Eph. "No more'n we'uns had ter do with bringin' on the war. The war jist come of hitself. The rich folks done brung hit on, if any-

body, an' po' folks have ter stand hit as best they kin."

"Why don't you make your rich folks stop the war?" Si asked angrily. "You kin do it if you want to. They started it, an' they kin stop it whenever they make up their minds to quit fightin', an' obey the laws, same as the rest of us."

"I tell yo' we po' folks hain't got nothin' ter do with hit, in no way," piped Eph. "When rich folks makes up their minds ter anything the best thing fer po' folks is ter stand 'round, an' mind what they tells 'em. Them as minds best has least trouble."

"I wouldn't live in a country where, jest because a man's got some money, or land or niggers, he kin do jest as he pleases," said Si. "Hain't you free an' independent, an' got jest as many rights as they have?"

"They done tell us something like that on Fo'th o' July," Eph replied, "but I'm a-gwine on 60 years old, an' I've never seed no rights that a po' man had but ter be borned, grown up, marry, have a passel o' young ones, die, an' have six feet o' clay shoveled on 'em. I don't s'pose po' folks'd be allowed graves if rich folks wanted 'em fer somethin' else."

"What's this comin' here?" asked Shorty, as they approached the great fort on the south side, in which was Capt. Wirz's headquarters.

With painfully halting steps, for they were chained together at neck and feet, came a gang of about 25 men, all ragged, thin to emaciation, and many of them nearly dropping from weakness and fatigue. On either side of the gang marched a rebel guard, with musket and fixed bayonet, and who urged them along with abuse and curses.

"Them's fellers as tried ter run away, an' got cotched," Eph explained. "The ole Dutch Cap'n mostly kills 'em when he cotches 'em runnin' away, but some he saves alive an' puts on the chain-gang as a warnin' ter the others."

"Si Klegg! Shorty," wailed a thin, weak voice, from the middle of the gang. They looked, startled, in that direction, but could see no one they could remember to have ever seen before.

"Here I am," continued the voice. "It's me, Zeke Pritchard. Don't you know me, boys?" he continued pitifully.

"Why, Zeke, is it possible that's you?" gasped Si in astonishment, as the memory came back of the stalwart youth of their company, and one of its best soldiers, whom they had last seen as they started on the fateful rush for the rebel colors at Chickamauga. This was only a sad wreck of that splendid piece of manhood.

"Yes, it's what's left of me, boys," called out Zeke as the squad hobbled on. "Look out for yourselves, boys. It's hell inside there."

"If it hain't hell outside there, with him," said Shorty, looking after him, with shocked eyes, "I don't know what the word means. Poor Zeke. Never a better soldier breathed than him."

By this time the prisoners had reached the vicinity of the fort on the south side, where Wirz had his headquarters. They were halted there, and Col. Tate was to turn them over to the commandant of the prison.

An undersized man, dressed in white duck, and wearing a gray military cap, came out of the sally-port of the fort with a blank-book in his hands. He

had scanty black whiskers around his rat-like face and sharp, ferret-like eyes. A perpetual scowl wrinkled his narrow, low forehead. In a holster hanging to the belt around his waist was a preposterously large revolver, with a cylinder containing 10 chambers and beside a second barrel, with the bore of a musket, under the main barrel. He saluted the Colonel with a jerky, impatient motion, and said in a harsh, rasping voice:

"Vell, Gurnel, you kot ofer here at lasd. I dought yo' nefer was coming. I haf been vaiting for you all de mornings. Vhat made you so lade."

"I come as soon's I could get the prisoners off the train," answered Col. Tate surlily. "My men wuz tired an' sleepy from their all-night's ride, an' wuzn't as spry as they mout've bin."

"Dese tamt Georchy Reserfes," sneered the Captain, "as solchers dey ain't vorth de gorn-meal dey eat in deir rations, efen if you koot ket de gorn-meal for nuttings. Dey plague de life out off me. Unt deir officers ain't a tamt pit petter. Dey all ought to pe blowed away togedder."

"Capt. Wirz," said Col. Tate angrily, "you shet up, yo' infernal Dutch fool. I won't tak' none o' yer slack. I'm a blamed sight better man than yo' ever dared to be, an' my men air better'n ary Dutchman that ever et sourcrout. Shet up, now."

"Gurnel Date," said Capt. Wirz, ignoring the personal allusions, "how many brisoners haf you kot?"

"Between 500 and 600."

"Dere it iss again. Petween 500 unt 600. You don'd know how many you've kot. Yoost like dese tamt militia officers. Dey gan't gount, unt dey ton't know anything for certain. How many did you

stard vrom Mariëtta wit? I'll pet you'fe lost half off dem on de roat. T'would be yoost like you Reserfes. You'd let dem jump de drain unt sgatter oud all ofer de gountry."

"You're a liar," said the Colonel hotly. "Didn't nary one escape. One tried to, but wuz shot down before he'd got two rods. I've got every other that I started with."

"I ton't pelieve it. Led me see the lisd de Provo-Marshal gif you. Where iss id?"

"The paper the Provo done give me? What did I do with it? O, yes, I done give hit ter Capt. Smoots ter keep. As he had to bring up the r'ar, I thought he orter have hit, that he mout know how many we had, an' ter keep track o' 'em."

"Yoost like a tamt fool Reserfe officer," muttered Capt. Wirz under his breath.

"Capt. Smoots, Capt. Smoots," yelled the Colonel. "Capt. Wirz hyah wants that air paper which the Provo-Marshal at Marietty done give me. Bring hit up hyah."

Capt. Smoots started to walk up the line, unbuttoning his coat as he did so, and putting his hand in his breast for the pocketbook, in which he had placed the paper. A look of blank dismay spread over his large, red face.

"I have bin robbed," he gasped. "I've done bin robbed of over \$500 in Confederit money, besides a lot of vallerable papers. Some o' them Yankees done stole hit. They picked my pocket, while I wuz on the kyahs."

"Picked yer pocket," said Col. Tate scornfully. "Bright man, you air. How could they pick yer pocket, when yo' had yer coat buttoned up that

a-way, an' wuz wide-awake, an' watchin' all the time, as I ordered yo'. Likely story, sah."

"Likely or not, hit's true as I'm a-livin' man. They done tuck away from me a big calfskin wallet sich as I allers tote my Justice's papers in. I had in hit, besides my papers and notes and due-bills, \$500 that I got from Nate Strawn for my nigger boy Bounce, beside some other money."

"Yoost like you tamt Reserfe officers," snarled Capt. Wirz. "Efery dime yo' ket near de Yankees dey sdeal you plind. Dey'd sdeal de ferry headts off you, if dey's vass vorth sdealing, which Gott knows dey aind. I egsbect some day dey'll sdeal a whole rechiment, Gurnel unt all, unt garry it off to de Yankee lines. You say id vass a large ledder bocket-pook? Vhell, ve'll vind id. Dey gan't hide dat from me. Which are de men dat vass in de gar mit you? Piht dem oud."

"All Yanks look alike to me," said Capt. Smoots, surveying the ranks with troubled eyes. "I can't tell them now. But them on the left line must've bin the ones, as they'uns got off the train last," and he pointed to the left of the line.

"All righd," said Capt. Wirz. "Now we're ketting at somedings. How many were in de gar?"

"I rayally don't know," said the Captain. "I declare I didn't count 'em."

"Of gourse you didn't, you hindwoods yokel. You'd titn't half sense enough to think off id, an' if you hat t'ought off id, you hatn't prains enough to gount dat many. You probably hat 60 or 70 in de gar. Ve'll dake de lasd hundret to make sure. Vun, two, tree," and he counted the front rank up to 50, and then commanded:

"Side step to de left. Dere. Halt! Holt up your hants. Now, garts, if vun of dem moves, or tropes his hants before I git drouh, shoot him down at vunce. Don't vait for no orters. Vatch dem glose dat dey don't drop nuttings to de ground unt hide id in de sand mit deir veet. Vatch dem glose."

He began searching the men on the right of the line with swift dexterity, born of long practice.

"There was a man in the kyah wearin' a sugar trough for a hat," said Capt. Smoots, cudgeling his memory. "There he is, now!"

"Yes, unt he looks de thief all ofer," said Capt. Wirz, pouncing upon the luckless Irishman. "Gone oud of ranks. Dake off your gloze, unt hant dem to me vun py vun."

The dazed Irishman did as bidden. Wirz took each garment and ran his hand over it, and threw it down on the ground. Soon the man was stark naked under the broiling sun, but no signs of the pocket-book nor of any of the papers it contained had developed.

"There was a man in the kyah that had a poke o' meal," suggested Capt. Smoots, pointing to another man who had received a similar favor to Si's. "Thar he is, now."

Capt. Wirz pounced on him, dragged him out of the line, emptied his bag of meal on the ground, stirred it up with his foot, and then compelled him to strip naked, with like paucity of result.

Wirz was getting to the end of his limited patience.

"How pig did you say dat bocketpook vass?" he asked Smoots.

"O, quite a good-sized one. Big enough ter hold writs an' summonses an' capisus."

"O, I know, pig as a horse-collar, unt yet you didn't know when it vass daken away. Vell, I'll vind id. Id's too pig for dem to hide."

He passed rapidly and roughly through the rest of the 100, shoving them about and cursing them as he examined, but, of course, found no pocket-book. Then he went back to the others, and put them through the same ordeal. When he came to the bunch over Shorty's heart, he thought he had discovered his quest at last, and tore Shorty's shirt in the eagerness with which he jerked the package out. He unrolled the silk handkerchief and let Maria's picture, letters and piece of dress fall on the sand.

"Only tamt lofe letters," said he, shoving the slik handkerchief into his own pocket and stepping forward to search Si.

As Shorty picked up his treasures, carefully brushed the dust from them, and restored them to his pocket, there was murder enough in his heart to have desolated the whole Southern Confederacy. A wicked-looking old rebel, standing not 10 feet from him, with a big blunderbuss of a gun, had a restraining influence.

"O, tam your olt bocket-pook," said Wirz finally. "I know dese men ditn't ket it, I'd've vound id if dey hat. Dey're smard, but I'm smarder dan dey are, unt I gan beat dem efery day in de veek. I pelief you laid your bocket-pook down some vheres unt vorgot id. Anyhow, I haf no more dime to vool apoud id. I've got to gount dese brisoners unt ket dem inside right away, before anodder drain kets in. I'll gif you a receipt for de number off brisoners you

haf delivered to me, unt you gan seddle mit de Provo-Marshal as pest you gan. I eggspect he'll gif you somedings to think apout dat'll make you vorget apout your ole bocket-pook, for you haf brobably lost half vhat you started oud mit. Sergt. Smit, take dese men to do north gate, unt distribute dem to fill up de detachments mit."

"But, Captain," protested Smoots, "I know that some o' them must have my pocket-book. Don't send them in till I take another look."

"I tolt you, tam your olt bocket-pook. I've vooled afay all de dime I'm koing to. You'd petter be think-ink apout de Provo-Marshal. Dat's more as \$500 to you. Sergt. Smit, do as I order you."

CHAPTER X.

FIRST DAY IN THE ANDERSONVILLE STOCKADE.

THE tall, slender young rebel whom Capt. Wirz had addressed as "Sergt. Smith," carried his head on one side, in a peculiar way, and was for that reason known as "Wry-necked Smith" among the prisoners. He did not seem necessarily a bad or cruel man. Neither was he a particularly good or humane one. He was simply an ordinary-minded young fellow, without marked propensities in any direction, and obeyed such orders as he got without comment, and apparently without opinion. At least, he never expressed any one way or the other. He put himself at the right of the line, and commanded:

"Attention! Right face—Forward—File left—March!"

The men tramped down the hill and past the breastworks, in which Si noticed were piles of little iron balls, to each of which was attached a stick, having pasteboard wings like the feathers of an arrow, only very much larger.

"What in the world's them things?" he asked wonderingly.

"Them? Them's hand-grenades to throw at the prisoners if they made a rush," answered an old Regular, who was tramping along behind. "We used

to have lots o' them things in the forts when I was in the artillery. They're awful things at close range if they go off."

"I'd like to git a chance to throw some o' them myself into that fort up there," said Si, looking at the heavy bastions around Wirz's headquarters, where the cannoneers, in accordance with their custom when new prisoners were put in the stockade, were standing to their guns, with lanyards in hand, ready for a rush when the gates were opened. "I used to be lightnin' on throwin' stones, and I think I could land them things in great shape up there among them artillerymen. I'd like to try a few jest for luck."

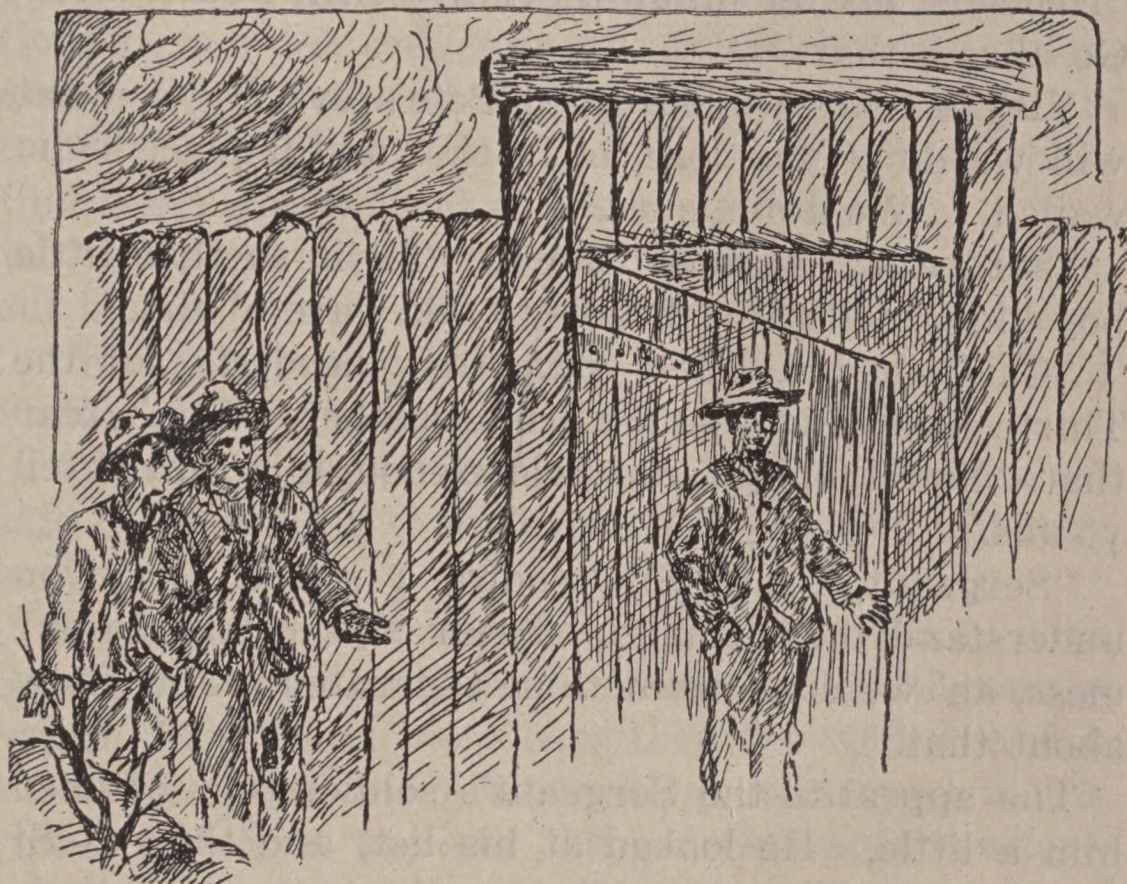
"Mebbe we'll have a chance if them fellers inside are ready for a break, as they orter be," said Shorty hopefully.

There were two gates to the prison, one on the northern side of the creek and the other on the southern. Both of these were made double by a square projection of about 75 feet from the main stockade, and composed, like it, of squared pine logs set firmly in the ground. Heavy gates of solid plank opened into these. The prisoners were taken inside these smaller inclosures, or wagons with rations driven in. The outer gates were then securely closed, and then the gates leading into the prison were opened. This effectually precluded any rush of those confined when the gates were opened. One of Si's hopes died when he saw this arrangement.

The prisoners were marched directly under the threatening guns of the fort into the inclosure around the south gate, and then the outer gates were closed.

"Yo'uns stay right hyah till I want yo'uns," said Sergt. Smith, consulting a paper in his hand. "I want now these hyah 11 men at this end o' the line. Yo'uns come with me."

He opened the wicket of the large gate into the prison and put them thru, counting them as he did



SI PLEADS FOR LITTLE PETE.

so, the 11 men he needed to fill up the places in the First Detachment made vacant by those who had died the day before. He continued this process until he came to where Si and Shorty were, and counted off them and Alf Russell, Monty Scruggs, Gid Mackall, and Harry Joslyn into a squad, leaving Sandy Baker and Pete Skidmore for the next. Their

faces blanched at the idea of being separated from their companions.

"Corp'l Elliott, you're goin' to lose me," yelled Pete.

"Sergeant," said Si, "those two boys belong to our company. Can't you take 'em along with us?"

"Can't do hit," said Sergt. Smith decisively. "Need jist six ter fill up the Thirteenth Detachment. Go ahead, thar."

Visible tears welled up in Pete's eyes. "O, what will we do if you lose us in this awful place?" he wailed. "We'll die, sure."

"Sergeant," pleaded Shorty, "fix it so that little boy kin go with us. I have to take care o' him."

"Can't do hit, I tell you. Only need six for the Thirteenth. But you'll all be together. Don't fear that. You'll find yo'selves close enough in thar, I tell yo'uns."

"Sergeant," said Si, "you're a soldier, an' you understand these things. Them boys belong to our mess, an' we don't want to be separated. You know about that."

The appeal to the Sergeant's soldiership softened him a little. He looked at his list, and then at Si and Shorty, his eyes resting on the buttons on their blouses. By some mistake what were known as "staff buttons" had been sewed on the blouses which Co. Q had drawn. These not only had the figure of the eagle very elegantly stamped, but had a bright, flat rim, and were dearly prized by the rebels, who were always very eager to get "Yankee buttons," and more especially the kind prescribed for the staff.

"Le' me see," said he, looking at his list again. "How many air thar of yo'uns?"

"Eight," answered Si.

"I need jest eight ter fill up the Fo'teenth Detachment. If you'll give me them air buttons on yer coat I'll let yo'uns fall back, an' put yo'uns all together in the Fo'teenth."

It struck Si as a funny proposition. He had not yet learned of the universal hunger of the rebels for buttons, coming from the inability of the Southern Confederacy to produce anything but clumsy, intolerably heavy specimens of these indispensable adjuncts to men's clothing. But he had never valued those that adorned the front of his blouse very highly, and without any more words, he whipped out his knife, cut his buttons off and handed them to the Sergeant.

"Want them air little ones on the cuffs, too," said Smith. "They're the hardest ter git of any."

"You're a regler Yankee at drivin' a bargain," said Si, beginning to understand. "But you kin have 'em, too."

The Sergeant disappeared thru the wicket with the six others he had taken instead, and on his return led Si, Shorty and the others thru the wicket, and a little ways into the prison, when he turned to the right, and then up into the extreme southwestern corner.

"Where is the Sergeant of the Fo'teenth Detachment?" he inquired.

"Here I am," answered a tall, thin but quite broad-shouldered youth, clad in a shirt and pantaloons made of coarse white bagging. He arose from a chunk of wood on which he was seated, while a comrade was laboriously cutting off his mop of shaggy black hair with a pair of very dull scissors.

"Sergeant," said Wry-necked Smith, "I've done

brung eight men ter take the places o' them what died yesterday. Hyah they'uns is. You'll draw rations for they'uns ter day.

With that Smith turned on his heel and disappeared in the crowd.

"Well, boys," said the Sergeant of the Detachment, as he turned to seat himself for a continuance of the hair cutting, "make yo'selves at home around hyah as best you can. I can't say that I'm glad to see you. Glad ain't no name for this place. You can sit down anywhere that there's room. Them boys as died laid mostes up near the dead-line thar, but their places have bin taken by the others who was watchin' for 'em to die. I'll look 'round for you a little when this feller's thru with my hair, if he ever gits thru, an' don't pull it all out o' my head with them blamed dull shears. If he keeps on hurtin' me I may get mad an' kill him before he goes much further. What regiment do you belong to?"

"The 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry," answered Si, while Shorty and the others were looking around in blank amazement at the wonderful and terrible scene which opened out before them.

"What! the 200th Ind.?" said the Sergeant, jumping up with such suddenness as to almost upset the hair-cutter. "The devil you say. Why, that was in our brigade. Splendid boys. Best regiment in the Army o' the Cumberland, next to our own. Say, ain't you Si Klegg, that bull-headed Corporal o' Co. Q?"

"I'm certainly Si Klegg, an' probably I've bin bull-headed at times. I'm a Sergeant now."

"Put her there, my boy," said the Sergeant, putting out his hand delightedly. "Don't you know me?"

I'm Ike Deeble, Orderly-Sergeant o' Co. A, 1st Oskosh Volunteers. Don't you remember me?"

"Why, yes, yes. You're the man that your company backed to fight Shorty for a purse of \$100 back there at Murfreesboro, an' the fight didn't come off on account o' your regiment being ordered off on the Manchester raid, an' we didn't see you no more till the Tullyhomy campaign. Here's Shorty now."

Deeble seemed even more pleased to see Shorty than he had been to meet Si, and shook hands warmly with him.

"How long've you bin in here?" asked Shorty.

"Well, I've bin here about three months, but I've been in other rebel prisons seven months—seems to me more'n 10 years. I was taken at Chickamauga with 10 more of our boys an' six of yours. Four of our boys an' two of yours died on Belle Isle. Two more of ours an' two of yours died at Danville; two of ours an' one of yours have died since we've bin here, an' the only one of your regiment that's still alive is Zeke Pritchard, who's on the chain-gang, I hear, for runnin' away. He can't stand it long. He'll have to go soon."

"Sit down, boys, an' talk," he continued, "while this feller's butchering my hair. Save him from my wrath if he hurts me too bad to stand. Tell me all about the old brigade, an' particularly all you know about the 1st Oskosh. God, I'd give up my hopes of Heaven in a holy minute to be with 'em now. How's the army gettin' along? When in God's name is old Sherman goin' to come down an' bust this hell-hole wide open?"

Deeble was so eager for information that Si and Shorty sat down on the ground and told him and the

dense crowd gathered around all that they could of the history of the army since Chickamauga, and of the campaign then in progress. All the Western men in that part of the stockade learned that some new prisoners had been brought in from Sherman's Army, and pressed around to learn, if possible, something about their own regiments, brigades, or divisions. They plied Si and Shorty with questions, but Deeble's were given the right of way and answered first.

But about every third question was one asked with heart-sickened plaintiveness by some, with fierce impatience by others, and with intense eagerness by all:

"What did you hear about exchange?"

Now, up to the moment of their own capture, Si and Shorty had hardly so much as thought of the word "exchange," which was henceforth to be of overshadowing importance to them. The hurly-burly of the campaign had given little opportunity to think of the fate of those who had been taken prisoners. It left little time even to think of the dead, wounded and sick. The living and active had all the time too much business with the living and active in front to pay much heed to those who for any reason had passed from the fighting line. Si and Shorty could only scratch their heads and answer vaguely that they had heard somewhere that all the prisoners captured on both sides were to be exchanged, but there was no definite date set, or other particulars given.

"Boys, open out there a little bit," said a voice in the rear of the crowd. "We want to bring our pardner up to see the new prisoners. He's heard that there's some new men brung in from Sherman's

Army, and he wants to see and speak to 'em. It'll do him good."

The crowd opened out to admit the passage of two boys carrying the wasted form of a third. His skinny arms lay around their necks. His face was pinched and pain-drawn, and his thin lips could not close over his livid, bulging, scurvy-swollen gums. Below the fragments of his tattered pantaloons stretched his wasted legs, with the ankles so distorted, swollen and stiff that he could not have walked if his feebleness had permitted it. His comrades set him on the ground, and he devoured the newcomers with eyes that at one instant flashed with the delirium of the departing soul, and the next were glazed with the waning vitality of the body.

"You're from the army—the Army o' the Cumberland," he whispered.

"Yes," answered Si, taking his wasted hand tenderly.

"You look like it—you look like the boys used to look. So big and strong and fresh. Not like we are here. It does me so much good jist to see you. When did you leave the army?"

"Two days ago," answered Si, with an effort at recollection, for it did not seem to him that it could have possibly been so short a time.

"My God, only two days away," shrieked the dying man. "Sherman's Army only two days away. Only think of it. More than 100,000 men marching and fighting not more than two days from here, and 25,000 men rotting to death here, like murrained cattle. Ain't it no farther between Heaven and hell than two days? Only two days ago you were with

them! You saw them marching in all their greatness and strength, going into line of battle, batteries galloping up, the bugles blowing, the officers giving commands; old Pap Thomas sitting on his horse and sending his Aids galloping one way and another, regiments marching and counter-marching, the boys cheering the Generals and the officers they liked, all jist as I saw 'em the last time, when we lined up at Chickamauga on Buckner's flank, and our first volley burned off the whole end of his line jist as you'd burn a straw with a match. Only two days ago you were with them, and saw all this. I could die happy if I could only look on it once more."

His head dropped on Si's shoulder for an instant. Then rousing himself, he inquired eagerly:

"But we're licking 'em, ain't we?"

"You bet we are," answered Si, earnestly. "Every day in the week, with a double-dose on Sunday."

The dying man grasped Shorty's hand for confirmation.

"Yes, sir," responded Shorty. "We're jist sockin' it into 'em right where they live, an' no let-up on account o' the weather. Before the leaves turn their damned old Southern Confederacy will be fryin' in brimstone batter, an' Jeff Davis be breakin' his neck to outrun the hangman."

"Thank God for that!" whispered the dying man in devout accents. "Wish I could live to see it. But—I—can't. Good—by—boys."

His head fell back, and Si laid him softly on the ground. His comrades arranged his shrunken limbs, and with a stub of a pencil, wrote his name, company and regiment on a fragment torn from a diary, which they pinned on his breast with a pine splinter.

"Say, you boys," said Ike Deeble, "if you carry him right down to the gate now they'll let you take him outside to the deadhouse, an' you can pick up some wood to bring in."

It was a chance too good to be lost. They picked up their comrade and disappeared. An hour or two later they came back, one carrying a pine rail, and the other a load of pine-knots.

"Well, boys," said Deeble, addressing himself to Si and Shorty, "you played in great luck in getting into our Detachment. We have this corner of the camp all to ourselves. We were among the first comers, an' we pre-empted this piece of ground for ourselves, an' so we ain't crowded like they are elsewhere. We have about the only street there is in the prison, an' so have room enough to move around, which there ain't anywhere else. We keep our ground a little cleaner than the others can, an' so you see you're among the aristocrats, if there can be any aristocracy in hell. You'll have room enough to lie down, but I don't know what you're going to do for shelter. You don't seem to have no blankets or tents."

"No," answered Si. "We stripped for the charge. Didn't carry nothin' but guns, cartridge-boxes, an' canteens."

"That's awful bad," said Deeble. "You'll have to lay on the bare ground until something can be done. By watchin' 'round you'll be able in time to snatch some dead man's blanket or tent, but you'll have to be mighty spry, for every dying man is watched like a hawk to get his things the moment he stiffens. That's my shack you see there," he continued, pointing to the biggest shelter in the neighborhood, and which

occupied the corner formed by the two dead-lines. "I an' my chums got in here when there was plenty of poles an' pine-tops, an' we knew enough about prison life then to lose no time in fixing things up. I wish I could take you in there, but it's as full as it can hold. This piece of ground, from here to here, will be yours. Squat on it, an' hold it against all comers. I'll be on the lookout for something to make you a shelter. Maybe I can steal a couple of meal bags when they are issuing rations. That's the way I got this shirt and trousers." He pointed to his garments with pride. "Scrumptious, ain't they? Dandier togs for this place than a swell Wabash Avenue tailor's would be for Chicago. Tell you how I got 'em. They used to issue us the meal in bags. I had to account for all the bags issued, but I'd cut a bag in two, an' count back each half for a whole bag. I got enough to make this suit for myself an' one for Dwiggins, my partner, before the rebel Sergeant got onto my little game. Make yourselves as comfortable as you can there. I've got to go now an' draw the rations."

"Rations has a mighty pleasant sound," said Si. "We're all awful hungry, as well as tired."

He took his squad to the ground designated by the Sergeant, sat down upon it and looked around, but his eyes grew so tired of the misery and wretchedness that met them everywhere that he quit looking, and began to think about what they could do to make their condition more tolerable.

"I s'pose the first thing's to take a good wash," said he. "Le's go down to the crick there an' wash."

They found the shallow creek full of men—most of them stark naked, trying to remove, with sand

and hard rubbing, the grime deposited by the pitchy fires around which they had sat or done their meager cooking. No one had any soap, and it required the hardest rubbing to remove even a portion of the grime. To get really clean was impossible.

There were the fewest near the bridge across the creek, and thither Si and the rest went.

They had scarcely begun when the guard in the perch nearest fired directly into the crowd on the bridge. A man fell with his breast torn open by the heavy charge of buckshot. The whole of the 25,000 men inside the stockade rose at once to yell the fiercest curses at the murderous boy whose musket had done such deadly work. The vilest epithets that the English language permits were hurled at him in choruses of a thousand voices. The prisoners immediately around Si and Shorty and on the bridge sprang upon another prisoner, knocked him down, and began beating him. Instinctively Si and Shorty sprang to his rescue, and by vigorous knocking and flinging aside his assailants, succeeded in freeing him.

"Great Scott, what are you all pilin' onto this one man for? Tryin' to kill him?" Si asked indignantly of one of the assailants, whom he had by the throat.

"He drawed the fire o' the guard onto the bridge, and had this boy killed," answered the man. "He ought to be killed himself, for havin' no more sense."

"I didn't do nothin' at all," gasped the bleeding victim. "I was just reachin' up under the dead-line there to git a cup o' clean water to drink. I didn't want to drink that from where the men was washin'."

"Hadn't you bin long enough in the prison to know

that you mustn't make a motion toward the dead-line there? Didn't you know that that whelp of a guard's only wantin' some sort of an excuse to fire into the crowd, and git a furlough home? If he'd only a' killed you it'd bin all right, but you got an innocent man killed."

"Kill the hound," shouted the others. "Kill him for havin' no more sense."

But Si and Shorty took the man between them and walked to the other side, where he was speedily lost in the crowd.

"Here's your rations," said Ike Deeble, when they returned to the Fourteenth Detachment. He produced four loaves of cornbread, about the size, shape and color of well-burned bricks. "There's a half a loaf for each of you. That's got to last you until tomorrow. I had great trouble in saving them for you. You must be sure after this to be on hand when rations are issued. It's a grab-game all the time here."

Si and Shorty, from force of habit, wanted to build a little fire to get their meal by, but they had no wood. The men around them had each a little bundle of splinters, which they jealously hoarded. The partners remembered that they had no coffee to boil, so they munched their coarse cornbread, and made the best of it. As night fell, the others, excessively weary with the fatigues and excitements of the day, stretched themselves out on the bare sand and went to sleep.

Si and Shorty remained awake, canvassing the situation and prospects in low tones.

"Well, we've never run up against nothin' that seemed quite so tough as this," said Si almost

despairingly. "It comes mighty near knockin' me in a heap."

"Well, there's some way out," said Shorty more hopefully. "We've got a wad o' rebel money, an' we kin do something with that, I'll be bound. I got that old brindled steer's nigger-money, that he made sich a howl about."

"You did, Shorty?" said Si, in amazement. "How in the world did you git it?"

"Jist by follerin' honest industry, while the rest o' you fellers wuz sleepin' the sleep of sloth and laziness," said Shorty in his superior way. "While that old poll-evil was snorin' like a steamboat whistle, an' the rest o' you wuz keepin' him in chorus, I snatched his leather, an' 've got it hid in this old shoe. We'll dig it out and tomorrow see if we can't buy something to help us out. This is a tough world, but the feller that works while others sleep will git along. What's that piece o' poetry?"

"'If you plow and reap
While sluggards sleep,
You'll have corn to sell and keep'——

"That's me."

"Five hunderd dollars in Confederit money," mused Si. "That'd send a man to the penitentiary for about five years. It would if we wuz in Injianny, an' the money wuz good. But the laws o' Injianny don't go down here, no more'n anything else that's civilized an' decent does. I guess it's all right. That old villain got the money for his nigger, an' besides he stole our shoes. I guess it's all right."

CHAPTER XI.

THE BOYS GET A GOOD START FOR A "TENT."

BEFORE Si and Shorty lay down to sleep they unwrapped the paw-paw bark around Shorty's shoe, took out the calf skin wallet, and cautiously examined its contents by the light of the rising moon. They found five new, crisp \$100 Confederate notes, and a number of other bills of smaller denomination, which were limp from use.

"I guess there must be a couple hundred more in there," said Shorty, making a mental estimate. "I must've got away with old Smoot's whole wad o' rhino, an' he'll have to beg or borry until next pay-day. I don't care. I only wish it had bin 10 times as much. We'll need it, an' he deserves to lose it."

"Gracious—\$700!" gasped Si, to whom that amount represented the price of a nice, snug little farm, or all the hogs and cattle that his father would have marketed in a very good year. "Ain't that an awful swipe to take from one man? You know I've got hardened to petty larceny—the kind o' cribbin' they send a man to jail for 30 days for up in Posey County, but I—I ain't quite up yit to things that have a penitentiary smell about 'em. Of course, tain't like it was greenbacks, but still \$700 is"——

"O, bother and bow-wow," Shorty broke in impatiently. "I only wish it was \$700,000. I only

wish I had a chance to snatch everything that every blamed rebel in the Southern Confederacy has. They haint no right to nothin'—not even their evil souls. It's agin the Constitution an' laws o' the United States for 'em to have anything. It's a good soldier's dooty to take it away, every chance he gits. The Ten Commandments don't go south o' the Ohio River. The rebels don't pay no attention to 'em; why should we? After seein' the way they're murderin' men here, I shouldn't think you'd hav qualms about anything, Si Klegg. Here, you take these three \$100 bills and pin 'em inside your shirt, for future use. I'll do the same with the other two. Here's about half o' the small bills. We'll put 'em in our pockets for market money. Let's see what else is in this old calf skin."

They went over to where a pine-knot was blazing in front of one of the sleeping places, and by its light and that of the moon, succeeded in making out that most of the papers were those connected with the Justice's office—writs, subpoenas, summonses, etc., crudely printed blanks, headed: "State of Georgia, County of Coweta, ss.," and filled out in still cruder handwriting, with returns on the backs.

"Better burn 'em all up, hadn't we?" said Shorty, with a motion toward the fire. "They'd be bad evidence if found on me."

"Don't seem right to burn legal papers," demurred Si. "Seems much worse'n stealin'. May hurt some innocent party awfully to have the papers gone. I've read about that in books. Better stick 'em away somewhere so's they'll be found jist in time to save some innocent man from bein' hung, or havin' his farm took away."

"I'll keep 'em awhile," said Shorty, putting the papers into the wallet, "and study what to do with 'em."

"The first thing to do," said Si, the next morning after they had washed at the creek, taken a comprehensive view of the surroundings, and noted how the sun had come up like a great, scorching ball of fire, "is to git some kind o' kivver. Layin' out-doors with nothin' but the clouds for a roof and bedclothes may do well enough when you're on a march or a scout, but it don't seem quite Christian as a stiddy thing. Even the cattle in the field git under a tree when they kin, an' it's a mighty mean man that don't leave a tree or two in his pasture, which is more'n these consarned rebels've done. I wonder if they're ackshelly white men and human bein's? Seems to me sometimes they're mostly nigger and Injun."

He and Shorty anxiously studied the thousands of shelters crowding the interior of the stockade for some useful hints as to the architecture of their proposed abode. They saw every conceivable method by which ingenuity could be made to eke out the slenderest materials. Most of these were blankets stretched, shelter-tent fashion, over upright sticks. Generally, the boys slept on these blankets at night, and made "tents" of them by day. Only those who were lucky enough to have more than one blanket could afford to keep one up all the time. Some had been so fortunate as to bring their shelter-tents as well as blankets in with them, and these were the well-to-do residents of the settlement. The white muslin shone out in gleaming contrast with the dingy blankets. Many had tried to increase the room

under their shelters by digging into the ground, and by building up walls of clay and sticks. The older prisoners had mostly shacks, made by sticking four poles into the ground and fastening them together by other poles, upon which they laid a thatch of long-leaved pine-tufts. But there had been little opportunity to get these materials in the later days. There were no trees inside the stockade, and the pines in the vicinity of the prison pen were rapidly disappearing.

"That seems to be the style o' thing we've got to come to," said Si, pointing to Ike Deeble's "tent." "An' it suits my idees better'n anything else. But how are we goin' to git the stuff? There's plenty of it in them woods out there, an' if we was only let loose with an ax we could fix ourselves up in great shape before sundown. I can't see why these beasts won't turn us loose an' give us a chance."

"Let's go up and talk to Ike Deeble," said Shorty. "He'll give us pints on how to go about it."

"No use, boys," said Deeble. "You can't get out now. When we first came here there was plenty o' that stuff lying 'round, an' for a button or two you could get a guard to take you out and let you pick up all you could carry in. But they've stopped that. You can't get out now, except on a written pass from Capt. Wirz, an' there's no use asking that old Dutch varmint for a pass. If you were dying it wouldn't make any difference to him. He sees too many men dying every day to care as much for them as we used to for dead mules. I don't know of but one man who's got a written pass, and that's a Pennsylvania boy who gathers shoomake berries for the doctor to cure scurvy with."

"A written pass," said Shorty to himself, a thought striking him, which made him feel the wallet. "Say, Si, these yahoos can't read. Maybe we can work some of our tricks on 'em."

"Yes," said Si dubiously, not yet catching the drift.

"I wonder if we can't work some o' these legal papers off for passes?" said Shorty, pulling out the wallet. "They're big medicine in their way, an' kin pull stronger'n a four-horse team at times. They orter git away with a guard if properly presented."

"Twouldn't do no harm to try it," said Si reflectively. "The guard couldn't more'n order you off his beat or knock you down. He oughtn't to do that much to a man caryin' a regular writ."

"Let's look 'em over and pick out one," said Shorty, opening the wallet. "I'll go down there to the gate an' try it while you keep the book. If it goes we'll work off the whole raft on 'em. If it don't—if the feller's too fly for me—why, it'll be the only one I have, an' I'll improve the long-haired goober-grabber's mind with a finely constructed yarn as to how I came by it."

The two looked over the collection of papers, and finally selected one which read, in print and badly scrawled penmanship:

STATE OF GEORGIA,
COUNTY OF COWETA. } ss:

June the 1st, 1864.

To any Constable of said County, greetings:

You are hereby commanded to proceed forthwith to the premises of Jakob Pancake and thar seize & distrain one fat hog, or 2 medium-sized shotes, or

his yearling calf, or such other stock or property that will be fully & compleat. Satisfaction for a Judgmint for 4 dollars & 18 cents, obtained in this court agin Sed Pancake, by Solomon Dinky.

Fail not on your peril,

SILAS SMOOTS,

Justice of the Peace

for Coweta County.

Si put the wallet in his pocket and followed after Shorty down to the South Gate.

Shorty pushed his way thru the crowd until he came to the opening in the dead-line for the gate, and then glanced around to see if there happened to be any rebel officers present who looked able to read writing. He saw none, and stepped boldly up to the sentry, a slender, long-haired, round-shouldered man, who stood in the open space, guarding the wicket of the great gates, and with a confident air, showed him the writ. Impressed by his manner, the guard took the paper, scowled at it as if reading it thru, and handed it back, with a motion to Shorty to pass the wicket.

Shorty calmly walked thru, before the envious eyes of the rest of the prisoners, as if doing the thing that he had an entire right to do. Si saw his success with a little heart-sickening, for he thought he had bidden good-by to his partner, who would lose no time in making his way to Sherman's lines. He walked back to his squad wrestling with the temptation to do the same thing himself the next morning, and leave the rest of his boys to take care of themselves. But he conquered this when he looked upon the fresh boyish faces of his squad,

turned upon him in anxious inquiry, and realized how much they depended upon him.

"I'll have to stick to these boys thru thick and thin," he decided for himself. "But tomorrow I'll take another o' them papers an' try the same game. If I git out, I'll surely come back, an' bring all I kin carry to make the boys comfortable."

The outer gates were open, and Shorty walked unchecked out into the open space lying between the fort, the breastworks, the stockade, and the creek. Rebel officers, soldiers, negros, paroled prisoners, and others, were passing in various directions, at work, on business or duty, or simply loafing from one place to another. Shorty steadied himself to look and act as they did. He even passed Capt. Wirz, who scowled inquiringly at him, but Shorty was too bold a dissembler to allow any discomposure to be evidenced in his face, and walked steadily on, while Wirz forgot about him the next instant, in a fume he got into over something that the Reserves were doing or not doing.

Beyond the fort Shorty turned to the left, for that would bring him soonest to the woods.

As he drew near there came an irresistible impulse to take to his heels and leave the stockade and all its horrors far behind him. It seemed as if the vile odor of the place would stifle him if he went back. He struggled for awhile with himself, and then said firmly:

"No; I'll go back. I'd be a coward to desert little Pete an' Si an' the boys. Pete'll die in there in a week if I don't take care o' him."

"It's all right," he mused more cheerfully. "I think Providence protects an' helps them what does

their dooty. The feller that tries to do right always ketches the most trumps in the deal. It's my dooty to go back in there to the boys, an' I'll do it if it takes my hair and toenails. I believe Providence'll stand by me if I do."

He was passing at the time a gang of negros engaged in felling timber to construct another stockade around the original one. Part of them had laid down their axes to roll together some of the logs they had cut. In an instant one of the axes was up under Shorty's blouse.

"What'd I tell you about Providence?" he chuckled to himself, as he put as much distance as he could between himself and the gang before the loss should be discovered. "Jist the minute I made up my mind to do the square thing, Providence gave me the tip to git the thing of all others I've bin wonderin' where an' how in the world I'd git. I tell you, a feller's a cussed fool that don't believe in an overrulin' Providence. I'll bet on it every time, an' give odds."

"Say, cull," called a voice over the left, "let me give you a little advice. Either steal a shorter ax or wear a longer blouse. The handle o' that one's stickin' down a foot."

Shorty looked in the direction of the voice, and saw a man in Union uniform—a prisoner on parole, detailed to do work outside the stockade.

"I saw you lift that ax," he said, "an' you done it very neatly. Couldn't 've done it better myself. But if you expect to git back into the stockade with it you've got to hide it lots better'n that. They're mighty partickler about letting axes git into the stockade. You look like fresh fish. What regiment do you belong to?"

"Co. Q, 200th Ind."

"The devil you do? Why, that's in our division. Bully boys they are. I belong to the Kankakee Rangers. I was wounded and taken last December, when Thomas made that reconnoissance out to Rocky Face Ridge. Let's set down in the shade there and have a talk. I've got something to eat which I'll divide with you."

Shorty accepted the invitation, and the two interchanged army news and prison information as they ate.

"I'm out on parole," said Hank Stivers, "from the hospital. I'm getherin' blackberry root, sassafras root, dogwood bark, wild cherry bark, white oak bark, slippery elm bark, and sich things for the doctor to make medicine out of. I know a good deal about herbs and barks, a great deal more'n any o' these sandhill crackers down here, and so the doctors set me at it. You're out here after stuff to make a tent? You'd better go down there where you'll find plenty of poles. Nobody's bin down there. But look out! Here comes old Pilcher with the hounds. Keep your wits about you now, or you'll git into trouble. Leave me to do the rest o' the lying. Don't speak onless you have to. The dogs've taken your trail and brung him onto you."

A surly-faced man trotted up on a mule. He held in his hand a cow's horn, scraped almost to the thinness of thick paper. On this he gave signals to the dogs which were careering thru the woods as he rode along, and now came swarming around the prisoners, barking, yelping and sniffing to catch their scent.

"Hyah, yo' sneakin' Yanks," blustered the man,

with many oaths, "what're yo' doin' outside o' limits? Don't yo' know yo're more'n a mile from camp? Git back up and git thar now. I'll done take yo' up



"HE," SAID STIVERS, "IS MY HELPER."

afore the Cappen and he'll give yo' a dose of the chain-gang."

"Why, Capt. Pilcher," said Stivers placatorily, "you know that I've got a right to go more'n a mile from camp. You know I've got to hunt around everywhere for medicine for the doctors, and they

got the Captain to allow me to go three miles from camp. That's said in my pass. You ought to remember it, for you've read it several times already. See here. Read it again."

The coarse, churlish "goober-grabber" who was master of the hounds at Andersonville, was as ignorant of reading and writing as he was of Egyptian hieroglyphics, but it suited the purpose to pretend that he was quite capable of reading the pass which Stivers handed him.

"Hit's so. I done forgot," he said, after pretending to carefully scan the pass and working his mouth as if he were reading each word. Well, what on earth air yo' settin' 'round doin' nothin' for? Why ain't yo' 'tendin' ter yo' bizness? I orter take yo' in fer that e'e. Who's this other man?"

"He," said the unblushing Stivers, "is my helper. I got the doctors to give me one this mornin'. There's more work than I kin do, with all the sickness in the hospital, so they had him detailed."

"Whar's yo' pass?" he demanded of Shorty. Shorty produced the writ of attachment, which Pilcher scrutinized with great care. "Hit's different from yours," he said, scowling suspiciously at Stivers.

"Yes," answered Stivers, placidly. "It lets him come out from the stockade, you see, just after roll call—you'll notice that about roll call, written in between the lines, and stay out until retreat, and go anywhere within three miles o' the stockade."

"What's he doin' with that air ax?"

"I had to have an ax to git the bark off the trees. I told the doctors I couldn't git along without an ax.

A knife and a hatchet wouldn't do. I had to have an ax for the big trees."

The master of the hounds still scowled.

"By the way, Cap," continued Stivers, pleasantly, "I just remember that I lost \$10 on that bet I made with you the last time I saw you. Here it is. I should've given it to you before."

He handed him a \$10 Confederate note. Pilcher's face took a pleasanter look.

"Well, go to work, now, boys," he said, as he remounted his mule and started off with his dogs. "Hustle around, an' git back to the camp as soon's you kin."

"There's the man I want to hang with my own hands when our boys come down here," said Stivers, shaking his fist after him with a volley of imprecations not loud but deep.

"There's a villain that deserves the lowest pit of hell every day in the week. Heavens, how I'd like to sink him down there, an' put a ton of rock on him, so that he wouldn't git out as long as the world lasts."

"Why, I don't understand," said Shorty.

"Well, you will understand, soon enough," said Stivers. "That hell-hound is meaner even than old Wirz himself. He likes to set the dogs on boys an' tear them to pieces. They bit my own chum so that he died in awful shape. You saw me give him money, I paid him \$10—\$5 for each of us. That's the way he blackmails all of us paroled prisoners. Every little while he drops on us for money. If we don't pay him something, he makes it hot for us, an' finds some way soon to land us in that infernal chain-gang, send us back to the stockade, or mebbe kill us

outright. The scum of perdition. I saw at once he had it in for me, an' so I promptly coughed up for both of us. We'll be all right for some weeks now, till he thinks it about time to assess me again. But you'd better git your poles an' git back to camp. I don't know how long you kin play that writ trick, but I'll keep a lookout for you tomorrow."

"Here, let me pay you the \$5 you paid for me, an' much obliged to you," said Shorty, producing a bill from his stock. "How in the world do you git money down here?"

"O," said Stivers with an expressive shrug, "these rebels think they kin play poker."

"I understand," said Shorty. "Costliest think that a man kin have."

"They play a better game than they did," continued Stivers, "but Great Jerusalem Crickets, that ain't sayin' much. They could hardly play a worse one. Even now, they couldn't play with the lance-teamsters an' brevet cooks o' the old division. Yet they are dead set on gamblin'. It's all right, though. They skin our prisoners out o' every dollar they have, either by downright highway robbery, or some other skull-duggery. We only git away from 'em what was never theirs by rights. I tell you, a rebel has mighty little show for his money that sets down with me. But I must hustle 'round, an' find some yarbs to take in. Hope to see you tomorrow."

A couple of hours later Shorty was staggering toward the stockade under a load of poles and boughs weighing the very last limit that he could carry. He could only go a few rods, before having to stop and rest. Arriving at the gate, the Sergeant of the Guard there commanded:

"Hold on thar! Lay that bundle down and open hit out, that I kin see what yo' got inside o' hit."

Shorty was rapidly learning the ways of Andersonville. He rested his bundle on the ground, fanned himself with a tuft of pine-top, and under its cover dropped a \$5 Confederate bill in the Sergeant's hand, which closed on it with the instantaneous certainty only acquired by long practice.

"Hit's all right, I reckon," said the Sergeant limiting his examination of the bundle to a perfunctory kick at it. "Pick hit up thar, and git inside at once."

Si had settled down into the gloomy conviction that his partner was finally gone, and was canvassing the dismal probabilities as to whether he was being chased by dogs, shot down by vicious citizens and guerrillas, or already recaptured and consigned to the horrible chain-gang. He and the rest of the squad were seated on the ground in a circle, munching their coarse cornbread. Si, lost in his own thoughts, said nothing. The rest only spoke at intervals and in low tones, for they were oppressed by Si's evident distress.

There was a rustle among the crowd down the little street, and some unusual exclamations, which caused Si to look up. He saw a great bundle of green pushing its way thru the crowd, and the next minute Shorty staggered up, let his load roll off his shoulders, and then fell to the ground with it in utter exhaustion.

"There it is, boys," gasped Shorty, as he recovered his breath. "I brung every leaf I could carry. If it had weighed another ounce or I'd had to go another step I'd never made it."

While he rested, the boys did a war dance of joy around him. They were overjoyed to see him back.

Si turned over the bundle with an effort and looked at it. It was a bundle of poles and tufts of pine-leaves, bound together with withes, grape-vines and briars.

"Open it up, boys," said Shorty. "It's a good start for our house. Don't cut the withes. We'll need 'em all."

Si carefully undid the bindings, and found inside the precious ax, and two fairly good U. S. blankets.

"I got over toward the other crick," said Shorty, noticing Si's look of inquiry as to the latter, "an' heard voices. I crawled thru the brush, an' saw a couple o' rebels in swimmin' in the crick. They'd left their blankets an' clothes on the bank. The clothes was no good, but I yanked the blankets. We'll not sleep on the ground tonight."

CHAPTER XII.

EACH DAY BRINGS FRESH EXPERIENCES TO THE BOYS.

THE arrival of Shorty with his burden brought an electrical change in the current of Si's thoughts. The conversion of the materials into a shelter for the squad became his dominant impulse. He had built shacks before, and so he did not waste much time in studying the architectural designs.

"Here, Harry," he said, handing the youth one of the poles; "take this an' dig a hole with your knife about a foot deep, right here," and he indicated the furthest limit of the ground assigned them, "an' set it in straight, an' pack the dirt down around it hard."

Gid Mackall, Monty Scruggs and Alf Russell received similar instructions for the other three corners, and in a few minutes the four uprights were in place. Then Si fastened them together with other poles, tied with the withes and vines.

"You've got the bones o' the house put together in very good shape," said Shorty, looking at the work critically. "The next thing's to git the skin an' meat on. It'll take a good many back-loads o' this truck to make the roof an' sides."

"I'll go out tomorrow an' help you," said Si. "If we each bring in a load it will go a long way toward

finishing up the house, and protecting us from the sun an' rain."

They spread out the boughs to make a mattress upon which to lay their blankets. Then Shorty, who was dead tired from the exertions of the day, crawled in. The rest sat around awhile, and talked over Shorty's achievement, and how they would go on and perfect their establishment, until they had exhausted the subject, and then crawled in behind Shorty, little Pete taking his place next to Shorty, while Si lay on the other end of the line, bringing all the boys between him and Shorty. They lay down on their right sides and "spooned" close together, to make the blankets reach them all.

"Scrouge up there, boys," Si commanded. "Straighten out, you haint got a 10-acre lot to lay in, Harry Joslyn. Take that hump out o' your back, Alf Russell. Sandy Baker, you can't curl up like a dog in leaves, as you do in a feather bed at home. Straighten out. The blanket don't come in a foot o' me."

"Don't scrouge up any more, boys," moaned little Pete. "I'm as thin as a ribbon now, and my gallus buttons, before and behind, are grinding my innards between 'em."

But Si was inexorable. He instructed them that when they were tired of lying on their right side to say so, and he would command "Left Spoon," when they must all turn over at once.

They slept fairly well thru the night, except for a violent dash of rain which came up quickly, as was customary in that trying month of June in Andersonville. The rain would come down in torrents for a few minutes, and then the sun would as

suddenly burst out from behind the clouds, and literally scald them. The damp men were awakened at early dawn by the rebel drums outside beating the reveille, and the fifes screeching the perennial, aggravating "Bonnie Blue Flag," the only tune which the rebel fifiers knew, and they could not play even that well.

"Blast their old flag," grumbled Si, as he arose, rubbed his eyes, and gathered some of the scattered pine-tufts together. "Tain't blue, it's got more'n a single star, an' I'm blamed if it's bonnie—hello, where's our tent gone?"

They all looked around. The sticks which they laboriously erected the night before had disappeared.

"Yes, and one of our blankets is gone, too," yelled Shorty, after hunting about for the one which they had over them. "Plumb stole away while we wuz snorin'! What infernal thieves have we fell among? Steal from their own comrades while they're asleep! Pull a man's house up by the roots an' carry it off from over his head, while he's in bed, an' take his bed-clothes to boot! Lord, how I hate a thief, especially one that takes away what another man's got by honest labor. The feller that took away that blanket'd steal the coppers off'n a dead nigger's eyes. A man that'd steal a blanket'd"——

Then he remembered how he had gotten the blankets himself, and added in a lower tone:

"Well, I only stole 'em from rebels, an' it's all right to steal from them. Besides, they'd stole 'em from our men. But if I kin ketch the feller that stole that blanket from me I'll pound the head offen him. The low-lived, ornery thief."

"The chances of ketchin' him," said Si, philos-

ophically, as he surveyed the swarm of 25,000 men incarcerated in the stockade, "are about equal to goin' to an ant-hill an' pickin' out the partickler little varmint that's bin nibblin' at your sugar. The blanket's gone, an' the feller with it. Our pole's gone, an' the feller's with 'em. We've got to make the best of it. I'll go out today an' bring in a load."

"Humph," snorted Shorty, "ketch me goin' out agin to break my back carryin' in truck for other snoozers to lug off while the rest o' you fellers lay 'round an' snore."

"Come, Shorty," expostulated Si. "Don't be unreasonable. Don't waste any time cryin' over spilt milk. The fellers here knowed we wuz greenhorns, an' they took advantage of it. It'll learn us a lesson. They can't play that trick on us agin."

"What are you goin' to do?" inquired the unpacified Shorty. "Rivet the poles to the ground? Grow roots on 'em? Fasten 'em with a padlock an' staple? Set up all night to guard 'em. I'm goin' to look thru the camp to find 'em, an' I'll make the feller that got 'em mighty sick, as sure's you're a foot high."

"It'll jist be a waste o' time," Si persisted. "A feller that's got sense enough to git away with them things when we wuz sleep, is smart enough to hide 'em where you kin never find 'em. Let's go down to the crick an' wash, an' after roll call I'll try the pass racket, an' if I git out, I'll bring in nearly as big a load as you did, an' we'll git a fresh start on our house."

Shorty followed his partner down to the creek, but still persisted in his maledictions against men who were mean enough to steal a house right from over the owner's heads, and in his determination to hunt

the thieves down, no matter how long it took. He kept looking eagerly at every shack for signs of his property.

To get to the creek they had to pass down the narrow street upon which they lived, to that entering from the South Gate, which there broadened into a large open space, into which the wagons were driven to issue rations. On the other side of this "Ration Place" the street continued on down the slope to the creek. On these slopes, both sides of the creek, were the densest crowds in the prison. The prisoners who had been put in first had occupied the high ground on the north and south sides, farthest from the creek, and at the ends of the stockade. There each "detachment" had a certain space allotted to it. It was just enough to allow each man about as much room as would be sufficient for his grave, but those belonging to the detachment allowed no others to take up quarters there, so that they had much more room for themselves than there was in the central part of the prison, where the crowds were forced in like cattle into a pen, until there was scarcely room for them to lie down, even when they "spooned" closely.

The slopes down to the edge of the noisome swamp bordering the creek were so packed with men that the ground could not be seen anywhere. The unhappy occupants, mostly later arrivals in the prison from the Army of the Potomac, were in as incessant motion as a crate of eels. Only a portion had shelter of any kind. Most had been robbed of everything but two or three necessary garments in the long journey from Richmond thru Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, to Andersonville. They had nothing in which to draw their rations, nothing

to shelter them from the burning sun, nothing on which to lie down, no settled place for lying down. They simply wandered back and forth, as long as their strength lasted, stopping wherever they could find a vacant place, until driven from it by the arrival of the rightful owner of that particular plot. Many were absolutely naked, and hundreds could be seen in this state, lying on the bare sands exposed to the full fierceness of the burning sun and the drench of the dashing rain deluges, with their emaciated bodies horribly contorted by the scurvy and dropsy, and slowly dying thru days of unutterable agony.

They had no comrades to care for them. Either they were the only ones captured from their regiments or their comrades had died and left them friendless. Everybody else had all he could do to take care of himself and of the boys of his own company and regiment. He could do nothing for men who had no claims upon him. There was always a little clear space around where these miserable unfortunates lay, like that around some perishing beast, for the ground was so vile with filth and vermin that it was avoided even by those who could find nowhere else to lay their heads. The only care the poor wretches got was from a band of devoted Christian workers, whose love of Christ and their fellow-man was so strong that they shrank from no duty, no matter how noisome and repugnant, that should be performed in His name. These made occasional rounds to the poor, friendless ones, washed their faces, helped them turn into more comfortable positions, cleansed away a portion of the swarming, devouring vermin that tormented them,

and performed whatever other offices that were in their meager power.

Sights of this kind were stirring Shorty to think of something else than his wrath, as he made his way down the crowded slope, and scanned the swarming wretchedness for some signs of his poles and blanket.

Near the bottom of the slope the crowd thinned out. There the ground began to be very damp; it was overflowed by the washings of the higher ground, every time the rain came down in a torrent, and the bordering swamp was so fetid that no one would stay there who could possibly find any other place.

Shorty's rage flamed up again, as he saw at a little distance in this "pauper district" of the prison a new "tent," made by hoisting a blanket on poles. He recognized the blanket as his by its having one corner burnt off in a peculiar way. The poles were freshly-cut and green, and there could be no doubt that there was his property.

He strode fiercely over there thru the crowd of abject unfortunates, with Si and the rest following. He had a torrent of angry vituperation fuming at his lips for the thieves, and his fists doubled to administer exemplary punishment upon them. As he drew near, two tall, gant boys, their eyes looking preternaturally large and bright in their sallow faces, their livid gums protruding beyond their lips, from the first horrible effects of scurvy, rose, picked up clubs made from the remaining portions of the poles, and offered battle in defense of their home. The only clothing of each were a shirt and pair of drawers, worn and soiled from lying on the bare

ground, and their thin, bony limbs showed thru the rents. Their expression showed that they had expected the discovery and attempted reclamation of property, but were ready to fight to the death to prevent it.

The torrent of curses died on Shorty's lips, as he stopped and surveyed them.

"What do you fellers want?" screamed one of them, brandishing his club as defiantly as his little strength would permit. Don't you dare try to steal our blanket. We'll mash your brains out if you do. You can't raid us, you whelps! Our partner's in there, mighty sick, and he mustn't be disturbed. Go 'way, before we make you. You raiders have taken everything else we had, but you shan't take this. We'll kill you if you try it. Go 'way, we tell you."

Shorty looked at them pityingly.

"You say your pardner's in there mighty sick?" he inquired in a gentle voice.

"Yes," said the man, relinquishing his menacing attitude, for the sympathetic tone disarmed him, and tears came into his eyes. "Look in there, and you kin see him for yourself; but don't say nothin'. He's awful weak, and the least excitement may kill him."

Shorty and Si looked in. There, lying on the damp ground, was a tall, slender man, older than any of them, as indicated by the long growth of silky beard. In spite of the distortion of the scurvy the face was seen to be one of education and refinement. The long, tangled hair fell over a broad, full forehead, and the large, brown eyes opened with an expression of deepest pathos.

"Come over here a little ways where he can't hear," said the man, "and I'll tell you all about him.

That man's one o' the best God ever made. He was just ordained in the ministry when the war broke out, and was minister to a church in our town. He enlisted and was Orderly-Sergeant of our company. There couldn't be a better soldier or a better man. He's as gentle as a woman, and as brave as a lion. There was eight of our company taken the first day



“KEEP THE THING,” SAID SHORTY.

in the Wilderness, and we're all that's left. The Orderly's wore himself out nursin' them that's gone. He was as good as a woman could've bin, and was patient with them when we wuz impatient, and now he's goin'. We could git nothin' to cover the others nor for them to lay on, but last night we wuz desperate. We found where some of them new fellers

had brung in a lot o' stuff. They didn't need it half so bad as we did, for they wuz fresh and strong, and had a good place to lay. So we waited till they went to sleep and stole it, not for ourselves, but for the Orderly. And we're goin' to keep it for him as long as he lives, or die tryin'."

A gleam of the old fierceness returned to his tear-stained eyes.

"Boys, that stuff was our's," said Shorty, "an' I'm glad you took it. You keep it. If any low-down snoozer attempts to git it away from you, come right up into the Fourteenth Detachment an' let me know. I'll welt his thievin' head offen him in a holy minute. Here's \$10 Confed. Go over there onto the North Side, where them fellers are sellin' things, an' see if you can't buy some bean soup, or something else that your pardner would like. I'm goin' up to our tent an' bring you down our pine boughs to lift him off this damp ground. Then me an' my pardner here will ditch your tent, an' keep the wash offen you. Mebbe we kin save your pardner's life."

"It's time for me to git back to roll call," suggested Si. "Then we must try to git out after more stuff."

After roll call, which meant simply standing in the ranks of their squad of 90 to be counted, for the rebels did not venture upon such accomplished book-keeping as having a list of the names of the prisoners, Shorty gathered up all their pine boughs and carried them down to the men to put under their comrade.

"We'll go down there this evenin'," he said, "an' put a ditch around their tent, an' help them in any other way that we kin. Them boys is good sol-

diers, an' they ought to live. I believe that Providence helps them that helps themselves an' others. I'm goin' to make a great big bluff at Him an' see if He won't stand by us to the limit. We'll every one of us try to git out on them papers, an' if we do, we'll bring back enough stuff to set us up in house-keepin' in good shape. We'll leave Alf Russell in here to hold the ground for us, for they may steal that from us if we don't watch it. He can't carry much, anyhow, and he kin keep the wallet, which we may need in the future, an' it won't do to risk it on any o' us."

A reconnoissance of the sentry at the gate showed him to be of about the same intellectual caliber as his predecessor of the day before. Shorty worked his ax off the handle, and suspended it under his shirt by a string around his neck. After directing the boys where to find him, giving each of them a writ to use as a pass, and directing them to come out one after another with about a half-hour interval between them, he took the ax handle in his hand and presented his writ to the sentry standing at the wicket. The guard made a pretense of reading it, and motioned him to pass thru the wicket. He made his way to the place he had been the day before, restored his ax to its handle, and was soon busily engaged in cutting material for their shack. Soon Si joined him, and then Monty Scruggs came. A little later Sandy Baker and Pete Skidmore put in an appearance. Gid Mackall did not get out until they had cut and collected all they could carry, and were making it up into bundles.

"Didn't I tell you Providence would smile on us,"

said the elated Shorty, as Gid showed up. "He always sides with fellers o' the right sort, an' I knowed He wouldn't go back on us today. Hello, here comes that scoundrel of a Pilcher, with his hounds. Lord, how I'd like to feed that scalawag to a thrashing-machine. I will some day, you mark me. Now all you fellers keep your mouths shut, an' let me work him."

The dog-boss came up with a scowl on his face and words of abuse on his lips. He gave little Pete a cut with his long whip, which made the boy howl with pain, and Shorty grind his teeth with rage. But he constrained himself with a mighty effort, and said pleasantly to the rascal:

"Hello, Captain; you see we're out here at work again, as I told you yesterday. The doctors sent us out."

Pilcher growled curses, to which Shorty paid no attention, but remarked:

"Cap, a friend o' yours inside said he owed you \$20, an' asked me to bring it to you when I come out. Here it is."

He produced two new \$10 Confederate notes, at the sight of which Pilcher's face softened. He took the notes and growled, but more amiably:

"Hit's hardly enough. Thar's six o' yo'uns."

"That's so," said Shorty, as if the fact had just struck him. "Well, we'll be out agin tomorrow, an' then we'll make it up."

"See that yo' do," growled Pilcher, remounting his mule. "Ef you don't hit'll be the wuss for yo'uns. You know I don't stand no foolishness from yo' Yanks. Don't yo'uns go out a step funder'n yo'uns now is. Mind me!"

"All right, Cap," said Shorty, cheerfully. "We're thru, an' goin' right in now. See you tomorrow."

"An' I'll see you sometime soon, when I'll feed yo' onery carkiss to the buzzards, yo' spawn o' the evil one," he continued, shaking his fist at the back of the receding dog-leader. "I'll make you shed a drop of blood fer every tear you've brought into this poor boy's eyes. Pick up your loads, boys, an' let's git back into the stockade as quick as we kin. The next thing's to git our house up."

It cost Shorty \$10 "Confed'" to get the loads past the Sergeant at the gate, but when they all safely reached their ground in the Fourteenth Detachment, and were laid together, he surveyed the accumulation with an air of deep satisfaction.

"Well, we've got enough for a gallus house—good as anybody's in the camp. I tell you, it's a good thing to stand in with Providence. It pays to do the right thing. I only wisht I'd got a chance to steal a couple o' blankets while I was out. We need 'em, an' I'd like to have one to give that poor preacher down there. But I'll git out agin tomorrow. I'll work that old 'Squire's papers as long as they hold out to burn. Who was it grumbling about they're not havin' more education in the South? I think it's all right. I don't want 'em to know a single thing more'n they do, the blasted vermin."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BOYS LEARN MORE OF THE WAYS OF ANDERSONVILLE AND HAVE AN ENCOUNTER WITH CAPT. WIRZ.

THOUGH they were quite tired, the success of the boys in getting in such a quantity of excellent materials, excited them so that they proceeded actively with their house-building, as soon as they had devoured the coarse cornbread drawn for rations. The moon came up brightly, so that they could continue their work after night.

They first planted, on each corner of the side fronting the street, strong poles about as tall as Shorty. These they united by a cross-piece, tied with withes. At the corners on the rear side they set poles about three feet high, and fastened them similarly. Then at the ends they sloped other stout poles from front to rear, and on these they laid a smooth thatch of the tufts of the long-leaved pine. This was careful, tedious work, but when finished it made a roof which would turn water almost as well as the canvas of a tent.

It took them until long past midnight to accomplish this. One of them sat inside all the time, and directed the thatching until the last crevice was closed thru which a glint of moonlight appeared.

Rapidly learning the ways of the place, they carefully gathered up every chip and splinter of the

wood, and stored it in one corner for use in cooking their food.

"That's a fine job as fur as it goes," said Si, as he rested and surveyed the erection. "It'll shed off anything comin' straight down, an' the most comin' from the east. But we've got to git some sides to it, so's to shelter us from the north, south an' west. Anything that comes on a slant'll git us, sure."

"Yes," acceded Shorty; "an' we ought to have side walls to protect our things from gents with light fingers. Our goods an' chattels are entirely too handy to 'em now. I am willin' to do all the heavy, able-bodied stealin' for this squad, but I can't fake for the entire camp, an' I object to havin' what I've brung in durin' the day sneaked out at night by cusses who're too lazy or too stupid to git outside an' snatch for themselves from the Johnnies. If we have a back an' sides to our house we kin manage to watch the front."

"Well, we've used up all our stuff for the roof," said Si. "We must try to git out tomorrow for more. Meanwhile, we've got to watch a while that they don't carry this off agin as they did last night. Alf Russell, you've done the least work. You'll take the first relief, an' stay awake until that guard there calls out 3 o'clock, when you'll wake Gid Mackall, who'll watch till 5 o'clock, when he'll waken us all."

In order to keep the guards in the little perches around the stockade awake and attentive to duty, the rebels adopted the plan of making them call out every half-hour after dark. This began down near the creek by the Officer of the Guard directing the sentry there to call out "Post No. 1—8 o'clock, and all's well." This was taken up in the order of their

numbers by each one, while the Officer of the Guard listened for any unlucky sleeper who should fail to promptly take up the cry.

Post No. 4 was that immediately in front of where the squad was, and the boys had become familiar with the long-drawn, wailing cry with which the sentry there announced the passage of the half-hours of the night. As long as the prisoners were awake each one of these cries was the signal for a chorus of profane remarks vilely insulting to the sentry personally and to those associated with and over him, to his people, and the cause for which he was fighting, and anything else that any prisoner could think of as likely to hurt a guard's feelings and make him understand that he was a blot on humanity. It was a howl of impotent rage, the only relief that the poor, tortured prisoners could find in their misery.

At first Shorty had sneered at the senseless exhibition of temper by the prisoners, and tried to reason with them that the brat of a boy up there with a gun was not to blame, but those who placed him there. But as the bitter misery of the place ground itself in on him, and he realized the wantonness of the horrors inflicted, and their senselessness for any military object, he loathed with an inexpressible abhorrence anything that bore the rebel brand, and soon his voice became loud in the chorus of contumely showered upon the guards.

In the field he had had at times frequent flushes of pity for the fate of men who were deluded with the idea that they were fighting for their homes and liberties, but there could be no room for such sentiment in his heart toward little, venomous beasts of

Reserves, who shot down unarmed and helpless prisoners, under the most shadowy pretexts.

"There's a good deal o' talk o' gangs o' New York toughs there," Si warned the squad, "who make a practice of raiding the new prisoners, an' takin' whatever they may have. They may try to git away with our house. Alf, you an' Gid want to keep a mighty sharp lookout for any suspicious squads comin' up this way, an' wake us up. Each o' you boys git a good club, an' have it by your side, ready for use."

"Yes," continued Shorty, picking out a good-sized stick for a club, and taking out his knife to shave a handle on it. "Ike Deeble told me that them New York gangs last night raided that big squad o' Army o' the Potomac prisoners that come in in the afternoon, an' took away from 'em a heap o' blankets, money, silver watches, an' sich things, an' beat one or two men to death. We want to make it mighty hot for 'em if they try to jump us. Keep your eye peeled, boys."

They all lay down on their blanket, except Alf Russell, who, after sitting down awhile, concluded that he would pace up and down the little street, guard fashion, in order to keep awake. He had to quickly desist, when he found the universal suspicion volubly expressed from the tents from one end of his beat to the other, as to his purposes.

"Here, you blamed sneak," yelled they with one accord, as his footsteps aroused them, "what are yo' tryin' to steal? Git back to your own place and lay down. Git out o' here before I club the head offen you. Git, I say."

As Alf had been a worker in the Sunday school

at home, and a sweet singer in the church choir, these aspersions on his character wounded him deeply. He tried to reason with his slanderers.

"Why, boys," he pleaded, "tain't right to talk to me that way. I never stole anything in my life. I ain't that kind of a boy. I belong to church at home. I'm only walking up and down to keep awake."

This was met with deep derision.

"Just listen to him lie. Night-walker like that pretendin' to belong to church. Worst kind of a thief. Look out for your blankets and tincups, boys. Git back to your hole, you rat, before we knock your head off."

"But, boys"—pleaded Alf.

"Will you shet up and git out?" said a shaggy, stalwart boy, springing out of his tent with a club in his hand. "I'll learn you sneaks to come around here, grabbin' our things. I believe you're the feller that got away with our skillet night before last. If you ain't, you've done something else jist as mean, and I'll give you a welting on general principles.

A score of others, awakened by the altercation, sprang out of their tents, club in hand to assist in the punishment, or resist any one who might come to the rescue.

"Sergt. Klegg—Corpril Elliott, boys," yelled Alf Russell, springing back to the tent, and shaking Si, who was on his feet in an instant, club in hand, with the rest of the squad gathering around him.

Si mistook the boy rushing after Alf for a raider, and promptly knocked him down, and two or three of those next him. He yelled at the rest to keep back, and everybody else yelled, as soldiers will, just because yelling seemed to be in order.

The guard at Post No. 4 promptly fired a charge of buckshot into the crowd. Quite unusual to the general experience, it hit no one seriously, though one of the shots scraped across Sandy Baker's forehead deep enough to draw blood.

At the sound of the gun, every one of the older prisoners instinctively fell flat on his face, and just in time to escape the charges from the guns of Nos. 3 and 5, who fired at once, quite willing to relieve the tedium of the night by killing a few prisoners. The prisoners instantly became very quiet, and listened to the guards reloading their guns.

The drums outside beat for the guard to fall-in, and presently the rebel Officer of the Guard climbed up to the perch of No. 4, and inquired:

"What'd you shoot foh, guard?"

"Thar wuz a ruction in thar, sah," replied a boyish treble, "an' a hull passel o' they'uns wuz makin' foh the dead-line, yellin' and cavortin', with clubs in they'uns hands, an' I shot inter they'uns."

"Did yo' kill any of 'em?" asked the officer.

"I reckon so, sah. I shot right inter the crowd, an' I seed several drap."

"I reckon you've done quelled 'em, anyway. Keep a sharp lookout an' if one of them makes a motion toward the dead-line, blow his head off. Don't 'low nary one of 'em ter even stand up. I'll go and tell the other gyards the same."

"S'pose we'd better lay down agin," said Shorty, adjusting himself to the blanket. "Lay down, Pete, quick. As Ike Deeble says, this locality may be the very best in the whole prison, but it has its disadvantages. It's too infernal close to 'em blood-thirsty little brats, with their old Queen Anne mus-

kets, with a quart o' buckshot for a load. When they're shootin' buckshot, I prefer to be a little further away. Great Jehosephat, I jist ache for the time to come when I kin git after these fellers with my old Springfield musket."

Everything became deathly quiet, for no one dared utter a loud word to give the guards a pretext for renewing their fire.

Si's and Shorty's burning rage did not keep them from falling asleep, after they had relieved Alf by Gid Mackall, and given the latter extra cautions as to his conduct.

The rebel guards on the perches changed, and the new ones received the same instructions given those relieved, and these were given in a loud tone, so that the prisoners could hear and be duly impressed.

For a few minutes the same silence reigned all over the southwestern corner of the stockade. Then when it seemed certain that all the old guards had been taken off and the Officers of the Guard had gained their places at the guard fire in the rear, and were possibly lying down to sleep, the guard on Post No. 4, coughed significantly, and struck three times on the bottom of his perch with the butt of his musket.

"Hello, Skinny," said Ike Deeble's voice; "is that you?"

"Yes," answered a wheeze from No. 4.

"Who's on 3 and 5?" asked Deeble.

"White-Eye Sim's on No. 3, an' Burdock's on No. 5," answered Skinny. "Hit's all right. Is Brad thar?"

Gid Mackall, who had gotten an impression that

something unusual was going on, had promptly awakened Si and Shorty.

"Not yet," answered Deeble, "but he'll be here soon. Have you got the things for him?"

"Yes, they are right down hyah. I'll have 'em up in a minnit. Zach, tote them things up."

"Here comes Brad," said Deeble.

Shorty recognized the newcomer as one of the "sutlers" on "Broadway," that led from the North Gate, and who did a thriving business, selling plates of cooked cow-peas to the new prisoners, who happened to have a little money, at \$1 greenbacks a plate, and wheat biscuits three for \$1.

"It's all right, Brad," said Deeble. "Skinny Tuttle is on No. 4, an' White-Eye Sim and Burdock on the other two."

Brad unhesitatingly stepped across the fatal dead-line and marched up to the stockade beneath No. 4's perch.

"Say, Skinny," he demanded, "did you bring all I asked you to?"

"Yes," answered Skinny, throwing down a string. "Tie your money to that, an' send hit up. I'll let the things down when I git the money."

"Here's \$100 Confed for the sack o' flour," said Brad, fastening a bill to the string.

"That's all right," said Skinny, after examining the bill. "Hyah's yo' poke o' flour."

"You sardine," grumbled Brad, as he hefted the sack. "You've snoughed enough out of hit to make you a loaf o' bread. But here's \$50 Confed for the bag o' beans."

"And hyah's yo' nigger-peas," answered Skinny, letting down a bag of those well known products of

the sterile fields of the South. "I've gin yo' heapin' measure thar."

"Hit's fairer show for my money than the flour is," said Brad. "But then what's a scoop-shovel full o' beans more or less to you? They're so cheap that a Confed dollar, wuthless as it is, 'll buy a bushel."

"Not now hit won't," wheezed Skinny. "Nigger-peas has riz like smoke, sence they've done tuck away all the field hands fer ter work on the fortifications, an' Confed money's went down. I'll have to have greenbacks purty soon."

"Well, you won't git 'em from me," said Brad, fixing another bill to the string. "There's \$50 Confed for that side o' meat."

"Blast you, Skinny, you're gittin' to be a bigger hog every day," said Brad, angrily, as he examined the piece. "This ain't half as much as yo' ought to give me for \$50, an' you know it."

"Hit's all that yo' orter have, an' every smidgin' yo'll git," snorted the asthmatic Skinny. "Do yo' s'pose I kin sell you bacon at market prices? What'd I have ter divide with White-Eye an' Burdock, let alone fer my own trouble? D'yo' s'pose I'm tradin' with yo' Yanks jist fer fun? How much d'yo' reckon I had ter pay the man ter git on this post ter-night? Pick up yer truck an' skin out now, afore the Sargint comes around. Git, now. Post—num-beh foh—half—past—foh—o'clock—an' a-l-l's—w-e-l-l."

Brad Wilcox picked up his load, and carried it over to Ike Deeble's tent, whom he gave a "mess" of peas and meat, as toll for his share in the transaction. He then departed to his own place with the flour and meat, leaving the peas to be brought over later. During the next two days he retailed his purchases

to the hungry prisoners at about 1,000 per cent profit.

"They're all on the make out there," Deeble explained the next morning to Si and Shorty, with a comprehensive wave of his hand to include the whole rebel garrison.

"As I have told you before, the whole hell's bilin' of them are crazy to make money—that is, all of them that's got sense enough to know a Confed bill when they see it. Those wall-eyed whelps of boys in the Reserves, an' those string-halted old men hain't got as much brains as a Northern ox. They hardly know money when they see it, an' can't tell one bill from another. All they know is to eat corn-pone an' shoot a gun. They are on a dead level with the idiot Aztec children you see in the circusses. But the moment you find a glimmer of sense in one of them—if he's got on Sergeant's stripes, or is doing anything that requires a little know-how, you can be dead sure he's wild on the make, clear up to old Wirz an' that gray-haired villain, old Winder.

"Old Winder's sons are standing in with the sutlers who keep that board shanty over on the North Side. Wirz skins the money out of the letters the people in the North send to the prisoners, an' makes those that do the searching of the new prisoners divvy up with him, an' so it goes clean thru the whole lot. They're the most corrupt gang on the face of the earth. Our cooks, teamsters, an' camp-followers are honest, upright men in comparison with them. You can buy any of their souls for a wad of Confed, an' it needn't be a big wad, either. That Skinny that you saw trading with Brad Wilcox used to keep a little store up in the country, an' buy the cotton

an' other truck that the niggers'd steal from their masters. The reasons that he has to play his game secretly is because he's naturally a thief, an' would rather steal than be honest, an' he's runnin' an opposition to some other traders that the officers are standing in with, particularly the big sutlers that are working for Winder's sons. Every villainous hound about here is a cold-blooded murderer, with no more heart than a rattlesnake. If he's got any brains he's a robber an' a thief beside. Old Wirz would starve a man to death for \$10 Confed, which ain't worth more'n six bits in our money, an' all the rest are like him. I don't understand why they rained down fire and brimstone on them comparatively respectable people in Sodom and Gomorrah, an' yet let this nest of vipers live and breed."

A study of the guard at the wicket giving promise of the desired illiteracy, Shorty repeated his performance of the day before, with the writs as passes, leaving Sandy Baker to keep house, while the others went out one by one.

The scheme worked as well as it did the day before, they made good progress in gathering materials, and they picked up their loads and started back for the South Gate.

With Shorty at the head, they had marched in procession around the big fort, and were near the South Gate when ill-luck brought Capt. Wirz down the hill, directly in front of them.

"Halt dere," he commanded with a snarl, as he gazed at the line. "Put dose tings town unt answer me some questions. How dit all you tam Yankees ked oud here?"

"I've run up agin about the toughest deal I ever

struck, I imagine," said Shorty to himself. "This is the head devil himself. It calls for my finest 24-karat lyin'."

Shorty would not have been the skillful poker-player he was if he had not acquired full control of



WITH SHORTY IN THE LEAD, THE BOYS ENCOUNTER
CAPT. WIRZ.

his face. He sat down his burden, looked calmly at the scowling little Captain, and answered:

"We came out on passes."

"Dot's a pig lie," stormed Wirz. "You pribed some off dem tampt guarts to led you oud, titn't you?"

For an instant Shorty thought that it might be the best way to give that sort of an explanation, and let the Captain wreak his vengeance on the guards.

It would be fun to see the rascals severely punished. But then he decided that it would be politic to stick to the original story, for he did not want to get the special ill-will of any of the Reserves, who might even up things by shooting him or others of the squad. He therefore answered:

"No, sir; we came out on passes."

"De tefil you dit," snorted Wirz. "Vhere dit you ket de passes?"

"Capt. Wirz give them to us," answered Shorty calmly, while Si and the rest shuddered at his impudence.

Capt. Wirz promptly threw a fit, characterized by a storm of curses, much facial contortion, and a threatening brandishing of his preposterously large revolver.

"You dell me a pig lie like dot, right to mine face. You say dot I gif you basses, you infernal scountrels," he screamed. "I show you. I plow your tamt headts off. Dit I gif you basses?"

"I didn't say you gave us passes," answered the unmoved Shorty. "I said that Capt. Wirz gave them to us."

"Tam id, I am Capt. Wirz. Ton't you know me?"

"Can't say that I do," answered Shorty. "I hain't many acquaintances in the lunatic asylum."

"Shut up your head, you Yankee pig. Do you say I gif you de basses?"

"No, I didn't say nothin' of the kind. I said that Capt. Wirz, or a man who said he was Capt. Wirz, gave us the passes. He was inside lookin' around, an' I told him that we hadn't anything to build a house with, an' he said he was sorry, an' that he would let us go out an' get stuff. So he wrote the

passes, an' we came out on 'em. No; he didn't look like you. He was a very well-favored man."

"I'll vell-favor you, you pigs. Brobably some off dem tamt Reserfe officers haf peen doing dis. Dey are alfays meddling vhere def haf no pizness. Show me your bass. But I'll vindt oud who id iss, and make him chump. Show me your bass."

It required nerve to carry out the farce by showing the writ, as a pass, but Shorty had it, and produced the paper with the air of confident innocence.

Upon reading the writ, Capt. Wirz immediately threw another fit, so much more violent than the first that Shorty began to hope that he would burst a blood-vessel and die. But he never changed his look of blank amazement that the rebel officer should act so strangely at the sight of the paper.

Wirz's rage was mostly directed at the stupidity of the Reserves, who could not read, and thus distinguish a genuine pass, and he included the officers who would put such "iknorant pigs" at the gates. He demanded and received the other passes, going off into a fresh paroxysm as he discovered that each one was the same kind of a fraud.

"Who gafe you dis baper?" he fiercely demanded of Si. "Dell me de troot, or I plow your head off."

"Capt. Wirz," answered Si, with a gulp at the lie, which Wirz fortunately mistook for a sign of fear of his revolver.

"Ton't you know id ain'd a bass? Gan't you read?"

"No, I can't read writin'," answered Si with another gulp.

The rest answered the same way.

"You're all tamt liars," said Wirz, exhausted with his rage, and stepping off a little distance and look-

ing at them with his revolver in hand. "All Yankees are liars. Dere's no troot in dem, and you are de vorst off de lot. I ought to kill efery vun of youns. Put I von't vaste powder unt lead on you. You'll die, anyway. Here, Sarchent, puckunt-gag efery vun off dese scountrels, unt keep dem so till I dell you to led dem ko. Dake deir stuff afay vrom dem, unt gif it to do guarts."

The Sergeant was at hand with a strong squad of eight or 10 men. There was no use of resisting.

"Sergeant," whispered Shorty to him, as he approached. "Here's a tenner. Go as easy as you kin, especially on that little boy. And, Sergeant, if you'll fix it so that I kin git that stuff inside, I'll give you \$50 Confed."

"It's a go," whispered the Sergeant back. Then he said aloud, "Squat down thar, you Yanks, an' hold out yer hands."

CHAPTER XIV.

SI AND THE BOYS GET OUT OF THE SCRAPE AND BRING THEIR BUNDLES INSIDE.

SI and the rest were astonished at the submissive-ness of Shorty to the painful and degrading punishment of bucking-and-gagging. For things incomparably less Shorty had in time past filled the camp with tumult. In fact, in the earlier days of his enlistment, which Si well remembered, Shorty had been something of a "holy terror," much to Si's amazement that he should so brave the legally-constituted authorities, and to Si's admiration of the skill with which he downed other men who felt that they were also considerable terrors in their way, and resented his assumption of the premiership. One after another of these had yielded to Shorty's superior strength and "science," and become his admirer, and an outspoken advocate of the theory that he "could whip anything in the division, if not the whole army." To this the whole regiment loyally subscribed, and it was making its way thru the brigade and division.

The more public outbreaks with their defiance of his officers had ceased long ago, when after a particularly cantankerous one, for which Shorty had done penance by several days of hard labor on the roads and the parade ground, after which Capt.

McGillicuddy had quietly taken him to his tent, and in a manly, sympathetic, half-humorous way which at once won Shorty's heart, had said:

"Elliott, I want a little private talk with you. I don't know of a better soldier in the company or the regiment than you are, when you are all right, nor a tougher nut to crack, when you are off your base. I quite sympathize with you in your uncontrollable desire at times to take hold of the company or the regiment and run it yourself. I'm quite sure I never quite run the company up to my own satisfaction, and I'm equally sure the Colonel feels the same way about the regiment. It's no wonder that others get even worse dissatisfied with it than we are. All the same, President Lincoln appointed the Colonel to run the regiment and me the company, and we've got to wiggle them along until he makes a change. Unfortunately, any failures or shortcomings in me don't hurt me so much as it hurts the company. The Captain is not of much consequence, but the company is everything. He is only one man; the company is 100 men. There may be one Captain today, and another tomorrow; but the company remains. You may not like me particularly well. That is a matter of taste about which there can be no argument. But I submit that it is not a fair thing to the rest of the company to carry out your personal prejudices to the discomfort and detriment of your 99 comrades. Don't you think so, yourself?"

After a little reflection Shorty had answered frankly:

"Cap, you're right. I can't say that I've bin stuck on you. Neither have I bin, so to speak, sour on you. I've jist felt at times that you was puttin'

on a few more scollops than any free-born American citizen ought to stand, an' I've kicked, accordin' to the Declaration of Independence, which says that every man has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit o' happiness. But I see now. 'Tain't neither you nor me, but the company that's the main thing. I'm with you for everything that you do. Here's my hand on it."

Thenceforth there was not a stronger upholder of discipline in Co. Q than Shorty, as several entirely too-fresh recruits found to their cost.

All the same, everyone knew Shorty's tornado-like temper when aroused, and his consuming hatred of the rebels. Si had fearfully expected the direst outbreak when the rebel Sergeant attempted to tie Shorty's hands—possibly a resistance that would only end in his death. Si, who had a resolution of iron, was less volcanic in temper than his partner, and would sullenly submit, when submission was inevitable. Si's wrath would give little outward sign, while burning none the less fiercely inside, as he waited for the inevitable turn in the tide when it could take bitter satisfaction.

But even Shorty's flaming temper had to recognize and yield to the cruel despotism of deadly force which reigned over Andersonville. Such a thing as pity, mercy, reason, manly consideration, seemed to be entirely absent from the minds of the officers and guards about the prison. They were absolutely destitute of all the ordinary sentiments of humanity which can be appealed to even among savages. The words constantly on the lips of the officers were, "if they don't mind you at once, shoot 'em," and the dull, inexpressibly stupid guards had no other

thought than to shoot at once, whenever they thought orders were disobeyed or about to be disobeyed. There was a startling absence of any conception of moral responsibility or compunction about shooting down men. Apparently they had no idea that shooting a man meant any more than shooting a wild animal. The guards, drawn from the remote country districts, and inconceivably ignorant, had been brought to regard "Yankees" as in the same category with Indians, bears, wolves, "painters," and rattlesnakes. They were as afraid of the Union soldiers as of dangerous beasts, and their first convulsive thought at any moment that a prisoner turned toward them, or even spoke, was to shoot. They were in a state of nervous dread of what the terrible Yankee might do to them. Reason, expostulation, persuasion, were as useless on them as upon a pack of wolves.

"We've got to stand it, Shorty," said Si warningly. "Take it, an' say nothin'. Don't, for God's sake, do or say anything. It'll hurt the boys, who can't help themselves, an' it won't do no good. This ain't our day. But ours 'll come, an' that soon. Wait for it."

He set an example by putting out his own hands to be tied.

"I'll do it," said Shorty, making a passable imitation of Si's calmness. "It's only lent. We'll pay it back with interest before the snow flies. I've taken an ambrotype in my mind of everyone o' these rebel hyenas, an' sooner or later I'll give 'em their come-upance in a way that 'll make old Nick have to put 'em three in a bed to lodge 'em."

"Yo' said yo'd give me \$10 if I done went easy on yo'," said the rebel Sergeant, an evil-looking man

with one eye, the other having been lost in one of the muster-day fights which were the great incidents of local Georgia history "afo' de wah." His front teeth were also gone—drawn to save himself from conscription. "Whar's dat money?"

"Here it is in my fist," said Shorty, opening his hand a little to show the bill, "but I ain't a-goin' to give it to you till you finish the job, an' I'm satisfied with it, particularly the way you handle that little boy. Mind your eye, now."

"Yo' gi' me the money now. Yo' kin trust me, yo' thievin' Yank," snarled the Sergeant.

"Nary a time," answered Shorty. "Don't trust no man. Never pay nobody till the work's done. There's your money in my hand. Go ahead an' do your work. When you're done come back, an' I'll give it to you. If you don't do it right I'll chaw up the bill an' you can't git it."

Shorty showed his usual shrewdness. Sergt. Jeff Tibbets had quite a reputation among the class of prisoners engaged in outside work, and trading transactions with the guards for tricky faithlessness and absolute disregard of his word. He was always ready to promise anything for money, but once having got the price in his hands, he took a particular delight in repudiating his bargain and reviling his victim. If the latter resented it, Tibbets was ready to inflict any cruelty upon him. If Tibbets had gotten Shorty's money first, he would probably have taken trouble to tie him and his comrades particularly tight, and enjoyed the pain he inflicted.

But he needed money mightily that day, and as he saw that Shorty was obdurate, he proceeded to execute his orders as gently as he could, and still

pass the inspection of Capt. Wirz, should he come along. Shorty was perforce satisfied, and opened his hand and let Tibbetts secure the coveted note.

The squad were seated in a semi-circle at the foot of a scrub-oak, and in front of a shack which was Tibbetts's headquarters. One by one, he sent the rest of his guards away on various duties, until he was left alone with the prisoners.

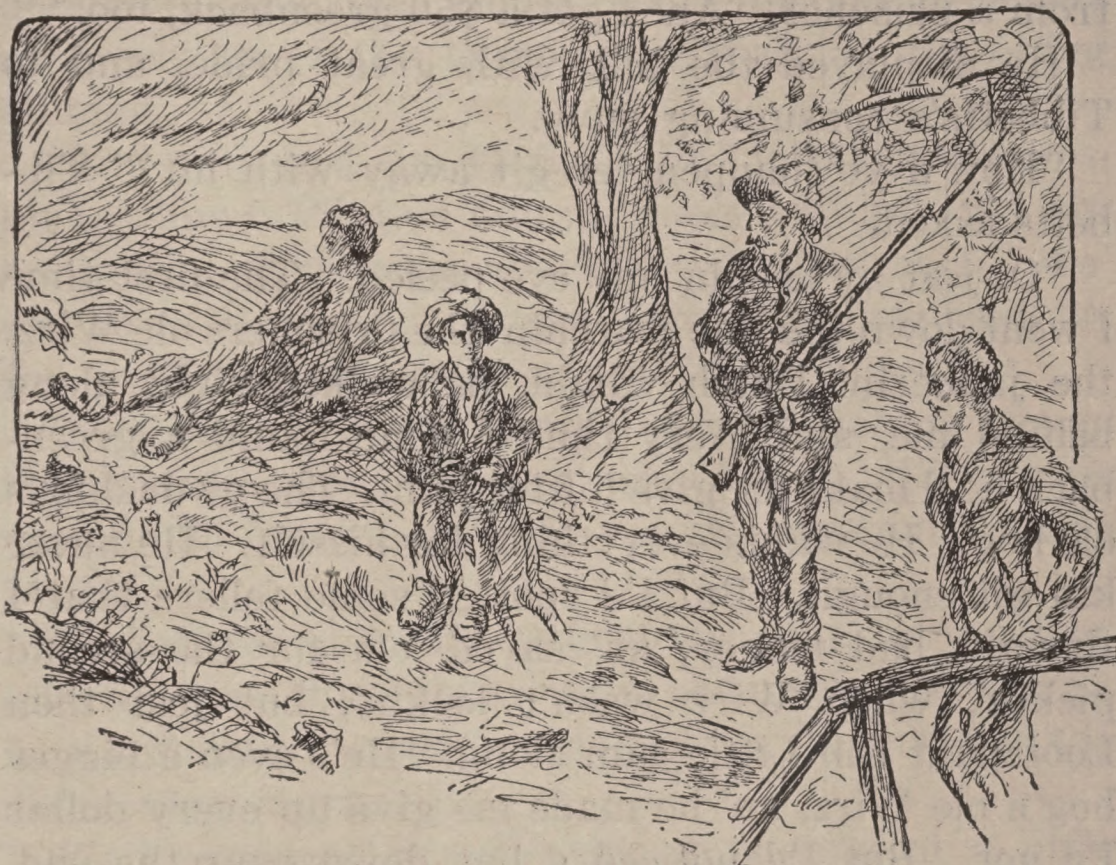
He was absorbed in reflections which seemed morose and gloomy, and made his ugly face uglier than ever. Shorty studied him and made up his mind that, like most of the men of his stamp, he was an inveterate gambler, and consumed with hunger to be "the smartest man with kyards in the camp," but was continually meeting with sorest humiliation in defeats at the hands of men who had a trifle more brains and skill than he had. This is the galling bitterness in every gambler's life—high or low. His soul is consumed with a sense of his own "smartness," and desire to demonstrate it to his fellows. But whatever satisfaction he gains from beating those more stupid than he is more than offset by the rage at being beaten by men who are only a trifle more cunning. Shorty reasoned correctly that Tibbetts had probably been cleaned out of every cent the night before, by some cheap, "tin-horn gambler," who was just a shade slyer and smarter than he.

Silent and morose, Tibbetts smoothed the \$10 Confed out on his knee, scowled at it, and wrinkled his forehead in anxious thought.

"Hello, Jeff," said another rebel, with Sergeant's stripes, approaching from the direction of Wirz's headquarters. "What yo' up ter?"

The newcomer was the same stamp of a man as

Tibbetts, though not so ill-favored. He halted a little in his steps. He had rolled a log over his foot to save himself from conscription. How much injury he had inflicted was a matter of dispute. He walked much better when he thought himself unseen than when under observation, and actually resorted to



TIBBETTS LEFT ALONE WITH THE PRISONERS.

crutches when the conscripting officers were pervading the land.

"Hello, Wad," answered Jeff surlily. "Got ter watch these hyah Yanks."

"Bin a-trussin some o' they'uns up," said Wad Greene, with a casual glance at the prisoners. Such sights were too common to excite comment from anyone. "Say, luck run a leetle agin yo' last night."

"Yes, dang it all," Tibbetts answered savagely. "Never did see kyards run so in my born days. I believe they wuz bewitched. I'm jest wonderin' whar I kin git a silver dime or a quarter ter give ter that ole hump-backed nigger at the station ter change my luck. They do say that he kin conjure powerful."

"I done got a quarter," said Wad. "Tuck hit from a prisoner. An' I got a \$50 greenback, too."

He displayed the bill, with great pride, and to Tibbetts's consuming envy.

"How'd yo' happen ter git away with hit?" Tibbetts asked.

"O, jest by keepin' my eye peeled. The first time I went down the line searchin' the prisoners ole Wirz, the jabberin' Dutch villain, he walked right along behind me, and every time I done found a greenback he'd make me give hit ter him. The owdashious ole hog. He wants everything for hisself. He never kin git enough. But I'd spotted some fellers that I thought had money, an' saved 'em for the second pickin', when Wirz wasn't lookin', but jest then Lootenant Bill Little cum along. He's even a bigger hog'n ole Wirz, an' he made me give up every dollar I'd got. But I'd noticed a boy down near the end, stickin' a bill inter his mouth ter hide hit. I went down ter him, an' choked him till he opened his mouth, an' I got the bill."

"Gol dang hit!" grumbled Tibbetts. "Why don't ole Wirz ever give me a chance ter search prisoners? I don't have no fair show in this outfit. Before I kin git hold of a prisoner you pets of ole Wirz have gone over him like a fine-tooth comb, an' thar hain't nothin' left for a decent man, who's tryin' ter do his dooty."

"Yo' don't stand in with the right kind o' fellers. That's the trouble. Lootenant Bill Little kin git yo' appointed on the searchin' squad. Give him \$100, an' say yo'll whack up with him, an' he'll fix it fer yo'."

It was one of the oddities of the guards at Andersonville that they would talk before the prisoners as freely as if the latter were really unreasoning animals.

"If I only had the \$100," said Tibbetts, "I'd give hit ter him. I'll give him my next winnin's, if I kin set inter a game somewhar an' win that much. Yo' say yo've done got a silver quarter? Le' me have hit for ole Quash ter conjure with."

"Not much I won't. I ain't squanderin' my money that-a-way. But I'll tell yo' what I'll do. I'll put hit up agin \$5 Confed, an' play you two best out o' three fer hit."

Tibbetts demurred a little at the odds, but a silver quarter was then not a very bad exchange for \$5 in Confederate paper, and besides, he wanted the silver very much.

Wad produced a well-worn deck, and in a little while walked off chuckling, with all of Tibbetts's money in his pocket.

"That was the rankest stealin' I ever saw. Regler highway robbery," burst out Shorty as Wad Greene disappeared. "Lord, how I despise to see a man rob another that way."

"What d'yo' mean?" asked Tibbetts, turning to him for consolation.

"Why, that feller jest stole your money. He didn't win it. You played a straight, honest game, an' a

much better one than he did, but he stole you blind. Never saw anything so rank."

"Air yo' done sho' o' that?"

"Sure o' it? I saw it as plain as I see the stockade over there. I saw it from the very minute he set it. He'd fixed up a cold deck for you, and rung it right in on you where you was playin' a square game."

Tibbetts went off into a torrent of curses, by which it developed that Greene had been skinning him for weeks out of every dollar that he could get. Shorty affected the utmost indignation and sympathy, and finally proposed to teach Tibbetts a trick by which he could beat Greene, and get his losses back. Shorty was positive in his assurances of being able to do this, and backed them up by doing two or three tricks, when his hands were released for that purpose. These quite overpowered the dull-minded Georgian. If he could only handle cards that way, he would clean out the whole camp, and cackle over Wad Greene in a way to pay up past scores.

But Shorty resolutely refused to give any further instruction, until he and his comrades were restored to their rights, which included being allowed to take their bundles inside the stockade with them. Once inside with the materials with which to complete the tent, he would devote any amount of time to giving Mr. Tibbetts full instruction into all the mysteries of cold decks, dealing from the bottom, and other devices for ensnaring the unwary.

Tibbetts finally decided that as Capt. Wirz had been seen going out of camp, he had in all probability forgotten about the prisoners, and would not recall

them unless brought before his eyes. Tibbetts, in view of the great prize to be gained, would take the chances on this, release the squad and march it directly into the stockade.

As the sun was setting the boys again reached their place of abode, and flung their burdens on the ground.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BOYS MAKE A PURCHASE OF SOME HARDTACK.

A GAIN the boys put in a night of hard work. It resulted in getting the back and north and south sides of their house as well thatched with pine-tufts as the roof. They were none too soon, for a torrential rain came up, without a moment's warning, and deluged the prison with water.

"Turns rain like a duck's back, don't it, Shorty?" said Si, lying back on the floor and contemplating the result with great satisfaction. "I only wish that every boy in the pen had one jest as good."

"And leave to come and go jest as he pleased, without ugly brutes in butternut clothes, and carrying big guns, stopping them at every step," suggested Monty Scruggs.

"And each fellow had his own nice Springfield rifle, with plenty of cartridges," added Harry Joslyn, with a sigh of regret over the treasured weapon he had had to lay down.

"And could draw every day a good Government ration of hardtack, pork, sugar, coffee, salt, and soap," mourned Gid Mackall.

"Lord, boys," ejaculated Shorty, impatiently. "You want to be in Heaven at once, don't you? You mustn't talk that way. You mustn't let your minds

run that way. You mustn't think o' the good times we'd have if we was back in the army with Sherman and the boys. If you do, you'll git homesick and die, like these other poor boys. Keep busy at something, so's you won't have a chance to think."

"That's true, Shorty," said Si. "But what kin we do, now, that our house is up, an' we can't git out no more on them writs? We've got some o' the papers left yit, but we won't dare use 'em."

"Well, we've got to do something," said Shorty, as he adjusted the pine-tufts at his end to make comfortable lying for him and Pete. "'Twon't never do to lay around an' think; we'll die sure."

They guarded their house again thru the night, but hoped that soon its newness would pass off, and it become so much a part of its surroundings that nobody would think of stealing it.

After roll call Sergt. Jeff Tibbetts came in, very eager to get his first lesson in the art and mystery of stacking cards, but not eager enough to obscure the fact that he was in an ugly temper. To clear his way from the gate, he knocked down, quite unnecessarily, a number of poor boys, so grievously sick and weak that they could scarcely stand, who were crowding there in the vain hope that the rebel surgeons would come in and give them something to alleviate their pains and stop the horrid ravages of the scurvy.

When he succeeded in finding the tent, Si was driving down a stake at the corner with the precious ax. Here was a chance for Tibbetts to exercise his baleful authority.

"Hyah, yo' Yankee scalawag, gi' me that thar ax, immejitly. You hain't got no bizniss with hit,

an' yo' know yo' hain't. Orders is all agin yo're having axes. I orter buck-and-gag yo'. Gi' hit ter me, I say."

Si might be slow-motioned at times, but never when quick thinking and acting were necessary. He turned around slowly, as if to respond to Tibbetts's demand, but somehow the ax slipped to the ground behind him, while he was asking with affected stupidity:

"What'd you say, mister?"

"That ax," yelled Tibbetts, coming up closer to catch it. "I want that thar ax, to-wunst. Gi' hit ter me."

"What ax?" asked Si, as if his horizon was filled with those useful implements.

The ax had not touched the ground when it was slyly seized by Harry Joslyn, who slipped it back into the tent to Shorty. At a glance from his eye Monty Scruggs whisked around to the back of the tent, the ax was shipped thru under the thatching, and with it under his blouse Monty sauntered carelessly off toward the center of the prison.

"That thar ax yo' have," said Tibbetts, roughly catching Si to turn him round, and look for the implement.

"I hain't got no ax," answered Si, giving a lurch that brought his shoulder against Tibbetts with such force as to knock him from his feet. "I did have one that I'd borried from a boy over there in the other Detachment, but he come up an' slipped it out o' my hand, jest as I wanted it most, an' now he's went away with it."

"Yo' air a-lyin' ter me," said Tibbetts, regaining his uprightness, and hunting around for the tool.

"But yo' can't fool me. I'm bound ter have that thar ax, an' I'll buck-and-gag yo' fer havin' hit. Yo've slipt hit inter yer tent."

"I tell yo' I hain't got no ax," stolidly persisted Si. "I only borried it, an' the man's jest taken it away."

Tibbetts fumbled thru the pine-tufts on the ground, and searched every nook and cranny, without success.

"Come, Tibbetts," said Shorty, "don't make a three-story fool o' yourself. There ain't no ax around here, an' you can't git it. You're wastin' time, an' my time's valuable, whatever yours may be. You've done your part, fair an' square, in passing us an' our stuff inside, an' I'm goin' ter do my part. But I make it a rule to 'tend to business in business hours, an' these are my business hours. Drop hardware an' cutlery, an' come to cards. Did you bring a deck with you?"

"Yes, hyah they air," said Tibbett's, producing a well-worn pack in a very dirty hand.

"Great Jehosephat, man," gasped Shorty. "When did you wash your hands?"

"Wash my hands?" said Tibbetts; "dunno when. Hain't had 'em in nothin' ter need washin'."

"Great Jehosephat; don't you wash your hands every morning?"

"Nah. Why should I waste time washin' 'em when I hain't had 'em in nothin'?"

"Why, I wash my hands regerly every mornin', an' some times durin' the day."

"Why, what a dirty runnion yo' must be. I'm glad I hain't so all-fired dirty as yo' Yankees is."

"Why, your hands looks like they was dead an' mortifyin'. If dirt was trumps you'd have a full hand. You never kin handle the psateboards with hooks like them. Jest as soon think o' gamin' over 'em with a jint o' rotten pork. Git a piece o' soap an' go down to the crick an' give 'em a good scrubbin' before we begin. Use plenty o' soap."

"Soap?" echoed Tibbetts, vacantly. "Whar'll I git some?"

"Great Jehosephat! Out in camp, o' course. You've got lots o' it out there, hain't you?"

"Nary mite that I knows on. Hain't seed none nowhar sence I've done bin in camp."

"Didn't you bring some with you? Don't your Quartermaster issue soap?"

"Nah. What's the use? Ain't a-gwine ter tote nothin' that we'uns don't need. Got more'n we kin do ter tote vittles ter eat. Hain't no room for gourds o' soft soap that'd be spillin' over everything, an' spilin' yer grub. What's the use, anyway? Soap's women's doin's. Hit's what they use ter wash clothes with. Men hain't no truck with hit. Great soljerin' that'd be totin' a gourd o' soap around all the time fer no good at all."

"Well," said Shorty firmly, "I ain't goin' ter tetch cards that you've bin mummickin' over with them mud-hooks. I'd be afraid they'd give me old-serious-final-come-and-git-us, or something worse. Say, you can't do nothin' with cards with sich paws as them. They'd hoo-doo the best cards that was ever dealt. You couldn't see a mark, after you'd passed them tar-sticks over 'em. You can't feel a mark thru all that dirt. Say, you wanted that old nigger to conjure for you. I'll tell you a better con-

jure than he has. You go back to camp an' find a gourd of soft soap somewhere. Take it out to where there's some dog-fennel jest about to flower. Look straight west, an' pull up a bunch o' dog-fennel behind you with your left hand. Wring the dog-fennel jest this way in your hands, an' squeeze the juice into the soap, sayin' all the time: 'Fee-fo-fum; I see the print o' Wad Greene's thumb, an' I'll skin him alive, I will, by gum.' "

"That's a real conjure, is hit?" said Tibbetts, with the light of hope beaming in his face.

"Dead sure. You jest learn it, an' do as I tell you, an' come back here, an' we'll beat him out of his eyes. After you fix up the soap as I tell you, cover your hands with it, an' give 'em a good soaking. It would be well if you heat the water. It won't do no harm to put a little o' the soap an' hot water on your face and neck. It's the greatest conjure I know. All of us use it. That's what makes us all so smart."

"Sounds like an awful good conjure. I'll do jist as you say. Say (and he pulled Shorty off to one side, to speak confidentially to him), I got to come in here ter look arter tunnels. Thar's a powerful sight o' them bein' dug, an' the Dutch Cap'n wants ter find out all about them. If I kin find out some hit'll git him ter put me on the searchin' squad, an' I'll jist git a wad o' money from the prisoners. Say, I'll tell you what I'll do! yo' kin put me onto some, I know. If yo'll do hit an' put me on to one or two, I'll make hit worth yer while. I'll give yo' the fust \$5 greenback I come acrost when I git ter searchin' prisoners."

Shorty's natural hot impulse was to rise in wrath

and break into several pieces the fellow who could offer him such an insult.

"Well, of all the roosters I ever met," he gasped internally. "Wants to bribe me to turn traitor with money that he'll steal from my own comrades. Wants to ketch me, too, with a measly \$5 bill. Wonder how much he'd expect to pay for Yankee souls in dozen lots? After all, though, that's high compared to the goin' price for rebels. He'd do all that, an' more, too, for \$5 Confed. But ther's no use in gettin' mad. Like the rest o' them, that feller's got no more sense o' decency an' right than a woods hog. He won't understand my gittin' mad at him any more'n a hog would my bein' sore at his comin' into the house an' layin' down to git out o' the rain. I'll make more by playin' with him."

Then aloud:

"Well, I don't see how I kin help you now. You see, I hain't bin in here really long enough to git on to things. I've bin busy gittin' our house up. I'll tell you what you do; you look around a little, an' see what you find. Then you let me know before you go out, an' I'll keep a watch on 'em. I'll keep my eyes peeled, too, for signs. Then you go out an' fix up that conjure, jest as I told you, an' come in tomorrow, an' we'll be in shape to do something."

To this reasonable proposition Tibbetts assented, and left on a tour of inspection of the inside of the prison.

So long as the minds of the boys were filled with the need of getting their tent erected and providing shelter, they managed to get along on the meager, unappetizing rations of coarse cornbread, baked on the outside as hard as a brick and frequently almost

raw inside. But as they contemplated with satisfaction the completion of their work, which gave them as good a shelter as was to be found in the prison, and infinitely more than had thousands, who either had very little or were absolutely destitute, and compelled to lie out on the sand, hot at one time, drenched with dashing rain at another, they began to think of the next prime requisite of life, proper food. Had the bread been clean, good and wholesome, the half-loaf issued as a daily ration, without any meat or other accompaniments, would have been scanty support for vigorous men accustomed in the field to three pounds of strong, nutritious food daily. But the bread issued was made of the coarsest possible cornmeal, unsifted and unsalted, merely mixed with water to the consistence of dough, and then the outside burned to hardness in the quickest possible time. The bakery was excessively overworked, and had to be rushed night and day to furnish a half-loaf of the wretched product to each of the 25,000 men then confined in the pen. To add to its unpalatableness the swamp in which the bakery was situated was indescribably filthy, and the filth bred innumerable maggots, which crawled around awhile until they developed wings. They added inconceivably to the other insect pests of the prison, for they filled the air, fell everywhere, and when they dropped on an exposed part of the body bit painfully. They swarmed about the bakery, and every loaf of bread issued contained some of the disgusting maggot-flies.

Sandy Baker's mechanical ingenuity had provided the squad with a fair equipment of cooking utensils out of the tinplates from the wrecked car-roof. They

used some of the plates flat, upon which to bake their hoe-cakes, as long as their meal lasted. Others were turned up into square pans, in which they boiled and fried, and from which they drank. With no other tools than his pocket-knife, Sandy constructed a bucket from bits of pine, and this served to bring and hold water. He carved out wooden spoons, and was fertile in other devices. Gid Mackall was quite as indefatigable in culinary make-shifts to make their rations more palatable, and imitated the other prisoners in parching the crusts on the bread to make a substitute for coffee. But there was a question whether more was gained in this way than by eating the crusts. His best scheme was to break the bread into crumbs, and boil it with red pepper, the only food product than was tolerably easy to procure about the prison. The hotness of the pepper helped to disguise the unpalatable, often nauseating absence of salt. The meal became more thoroughly cooked, and for the moment the rations seemed more filling than when eaten in the form it came from the bakery.

Si and Shorty got along on their rations for several days without complaint, and their boys, imitating their example, did no grumbling. But as they were sitting in the proud enjoyment of their house, the partners noticed Alf Russell squeamishly picking the maggot-flies out of his bread with a pine splinter, his face wreathed with disgust, while Pete Skidmore was evidently trying to force himself to take the first bite on the brickbat-like chunk which he had just drawn.

"Great Scott, Shorty," said Si, "we may stand this grub, but them poor boys can't. They ain't as tough

as we are. There's poor little Pete, who hain't had his growth yit. He won't live a week unless he gits something decent to eat. Anyhow, he's likely to be stunted for life."

"Jest what I've bin thinkin', Si. We can't let them poor boys starve, on no account. We'll try to worry it out, but they must have something. The expenses o' buildin' this tent've made a pretty big hole in our cash, but we still have something left. When it's gone, Providence will provide for more, same's He did before. Le's go over on to Broadway, an' see what them pirates over there have to sell."

Leaving the boys to look out for the precious tent, with strict injunctions as to what to do, the partners made their way down thru the sad throng of thousands gathered around the South Gate anxiously awaiting the incoming of the rebel surgeons. They looked around as little as possible, as they threaded their way carefully thru the massed suffering and death of the prison, for they would avoid being shocked by the sights of such appalling misery.

Every repulsive form into which chronic hunger and the horrible scurvy could distort the face, limbs and body of a man could be seen in that infinitely wretched congregation.

But why look upon the starving men and their putrefying bodies?

Mere sympathy was an idle mockery.

"Jest think o' it," shuddered Si. "If Pap could only drive in here with a wagon load o' new pertaters it would cure every one o' these poor fellers. An' how glad he'd be to do it to a gang o' rebel prisoners who was his bitterest enemies. These rebels claim to be Christians, yit not in the whole State o' Georgy

is there a man who'll give a cart-load o' green stuff to save the lives o' a thousand men."

"Liars! murderers! traitors! robbers! thieves!" burst out Shorty violently. "They hain't half as much Christianity among 'em as among Digger Injuns. I wish the whole Southern Confederacy was hangin' over the smokin' pit o' hell by a string, an' I had a knife. I'd cut it in a holy minute, if I sunk with the rest."

Descending the slope, they cast a wary eye upon the sentinel in the box nearest the creek, to discover if he had any present intention of carrying out the semi-daily performance of firing into the crowd on the bridge across the creek. Apparently he did not. The creek was full of muddy water, from the heavy rain of the night, and as there was little choice in cleanliness, there were no men reaching up toward the dead-line for clean water, which would afford the guard a pretext for shooting. He had his gun lying across the top of the stockade, and was scratching his shockhead with an energy that the rebels never showed in any other occupation.

"Wish I could see a line o' our cavalry raise the hill yonder," said Si, expressing an aspiration that came perpetually to the lips of the prisoners, "an' fire a volley that'd knock the dumb' heads off every whelp in them perches."

"We'll see 'em soon. We'll see 'em soon. Jest wait," said Shorty hopefully. "Ole Sherman's puttin' in full time every day, an' every day brings him lots nearer. The moon won't change many times till we'll see our cavalry lopin' thru them woods, an' these hellions runnin' like rats from a terrier.

They ascended the slope on the other side, to

where the broadest and longest street in the prison ran due east from the North Gate. This the prisoners dubbed "Broadway," from its pre-eminence among the paths in the prison.

Another reason was because it was the chief mart in the stockade. In spite of the hunger, starvation, deadly sickness and abject misery of the place, there was still the active spirit of trade and commerce, and all the more enterprising traders congregated along Broadway. It was astonishing to see the kind and number of things that found their way into prison, despite the robberies of the prisoners on the field, on their way to Andersonville, and by the searchers at Wirz's headquarters. Dire necessity for food had driven their owners to offer for sale their most cherished belongings for anything that they would bring. There were gold and silver watches, gold pens, violins, flutes, rings, breast-pins, lockets, knives, pocket-books, combs, silk handkerchiefs, and articles of clothing.

These were entrusted by their owners to traders who sold them to other prisoners, or more frequently to rebel officers, who came in to buy things cheaply that their own stores were destitute of. But the most numerous and active of the traders were those who bought bundles of wood, pieces of meat, sacks of cow-peas, flour, meal, new potatoes, sweet potatoes, peaches, etc., and watermelons of the guards, and retailed them to the prisoners, at more than gold-mine profits. They baked the flour into little biscuits, and boiled the cow-peas to a thick soup, which they sold in dishes made of half-canteens. The new prisoners, who brought a little money in, and could not come down to the coarse

cornbread, speedily squandered it for the cow-peas and wheat biscuits. Everybody was suffering from, and thousands dying of, scurvy, for which water-melons, Irish and sweet potatoes and peaches were sovereign remedies, and many sold even their most necessary clothing to obtain these antidotes.

As Si and Shorty turned into Broadway, the clamor of voices, separated itself into understandable yells of

"Nice fat pine—10 cents in money or \$1 Confed."

"Here's your nice wheat biscuits, only \$1 green-back for three."

"Sweet sorghum molasses, 10 cents a cup or \$1 Confed."

"Come an' git your bean-soup. Only \$1 green-back a plate."

"Nice, big, ripe watermelons. Only \$5 in green-backs apiece."

"Here's your big sweet taters. Best thing in the world for scurvy. Only 10 cents in money, or \$1 Confed."

"Fine Irish taters. Only a quarter a-piece in money, or two for \$5 Confed."

"Here's your fresh country eggs, hardbiled. Three for \$1 greenback in money, or \$10 Confed."

Si and Shorty looked at the displays of food, their mouths watered for the viands, and they chattered with the venders, but found that there was no cutting their prices.

"It's no use, Si," said Shorty, turning away with a sigh. "All the money we've got wouldn't more'n buy a square meal for the boys at these prices, an' then we'll be without anything. We'd better try to

buy from the guards ourselves, an' save the middlemen's profits. We'll try it tonight."

They walked a little farther, and heard a boy shouting:

"Here's your genuine United States hardtack. Only \$1 in money a piece. Only real hardtack in



SI AND SHORTY MAKE A PURCHASE OF HARDTACK.

camp. Last chance, gentlemen, to git a bite o' God's vittels. Don't let the opportunity slip. You don't know when you'll have another."

A hungry, covetous crowd gathered around the "barker," and looked with eager eyes and watering mouths upon the precious food, which he had temptingly displayed upon a board in front of him, suspended by a string around his neck. They looked

ready to snatch the crackers away, but were deterred by the seller's evident look of strength and the large club he carried.

Si and Shorty pushed thru the crowd and gazed longingly at the crackers. Nothing in the food line had ever seemed so tempting as these commonplace constituents of the Regular Army ration. Their eager interest alarmed the trader.

"Stand back," he said, raising his club. "Don't try to raid me. I'll crack your heads if you attempt it."

"We ain't goin' to raid you," Si answered. "We ain't that kind. Where in the world did you git them crackers? The sight o' them is good for sore eyes."

"A boy that was brung in yesterday had his haversack full of 'em. I give him \$1 Confed apiece for 'em."

"Great Jehosephat, but they do look good. How much did you say you wanted for 'em?"

"Jist \$1 greenbacks apieces."

"Great Scott, you don't want no profit, do you?"

"That's my business, not yours. These are the only hard, genuine, Uncle Sam's hardtack in the prison. If you want one you'll pay \$1 greenback for it, or you don't get it. And you've got to speak mighty quick, too, for this is all I've got, and there's lots o' men willing to pay that for 'em. Say, do you want 'em or not?"

The partners looked longingly at them, and then thought of the slender stock of greenbacks they had managed to conceal from the searchers when they came it.

"Seems like a scandalous waste o' money," Si

whispered to Shorty; "but I'd give more for one bite o' hardtack than anything else in the world."

"Same here. Say, pardner, we want eight o' 'em. Can't you give us wholesale prices on 'em? Can't you let us have eight for a \$5 bill?"

"No sirree. No Jew about me. No shave or discount on them things. They're \$1 apiece straight. That only gives me one per cent profit—one dollar in money for a dollar Confed."

Si made a wry face, but the temptation was irresistible. He went down in his fob and produced a little wad of greenbacks, from which, with a sigh, he painfully skinned a \$5 bill and three \$1's, while Shorty carefully picked out the eight best crackers in the trader's store.

"We'll have to hide these, Si," said he, as he stowed part of them in his bosom, and handed the others to Si, "or we'll be mobbed on the way back. It's as much as that feller's life's worth to go around showin' hardtack in this crowd."

"Here's your genuine Uncle Sam's hardtack. Only taste of God's vittels to be found in this camp. Only four left, boys! One dollar greenbacks apiece. Last chance. No Confed money taken," shouted the trader, as he moved on.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BOYS HAVE SOME EXPERIENCES WITH TUNNELS.

“**T**HAR’S jist rafts o’ tunnels bein’ dug,” said Sergt. Tibbetts, returning from his tour of inspection. “All along the west an’ south sides. They’re tryin’ ter kivver ’em up by purtendin’ ter dig wells an’ places fer their tents. What fools they’uns is ter try ter git out on them sides. They’uns’ll only run right straight inter our folks somewhar afore they’uns go 10 rods. Now, on yan side”——

He stopped, but not before Shorty had gotten a sufficient hint as to the location of any tunnels that he might take an interest in.

“Mouty few or none o’ them’ll amount ter anything,” continued Tibbetts. “The fellers what’s diggin’ hain’t stren’t h enough ter dig a rod underground, if they was left ter go ahead with their work. And if they got out they’uns kain’t go a quarter of a mile.”

“What’s the sense o’ botherin’ with ’em, then?” asked Shorty. “If they can’t do no harm, why not let ’em alone?”

“Huh, what d’yo’ ’spose I’m in hyah fer? The more o’ they’uns I kin find out an’ git punished the better’ll be my chances ter git on the searchin’ squad,

an' I kin pay you that \$5 greenbacks I promised yo'."

"Ain't you the orneriest whelp that God ever put breath into?" Shorty thought. "A bob-tailed hyena is a gentleman alongside o' you. I wish I had you on the Mississippi, where I could feed you to an old he alligator, with a mouth as long as a fence-rail, an' teeth like a rip-saw. He'd lay you up under a root somewhere to spile an' git game before he'd eat you."

"Say, I've got ter skeet out now. I want ter ketch the ole Dutch Cap'n an' report ter him. I'll have quite a story ter tell him. Mebbe he'll appint me ter search right away. Anyhow, I'll go out an' try that conjure yo' done tole me about an' be in termorrer about this time. So yo' take a leetle jant ternight over ter the North Side, about whar the new stockade begins, an' keep yer eye peeled fer what yo' kin see. Yo' kin track 'em easy ter their holes by watchin' fer fellers totin' away dirt. Le' me know when I come in what yo' find out. Yo' help me an' I'll help yo'. Understand?"

"Yes, I understand," answered Shorty. It would not have needed a mind-reader to look at him as Tibbetts turned away, to know that his "understanding" was not at all in harmony with that in the rebel Sergeant's mind.

"How did you keep from weltin' his dumb head offen him, Shorty?" asked Si, when his partner had detailed to him the substance of the conversation with Tibbetts. "I've got a heap better temper'n you have, but I couldn't stand havin' a rebel blatherskite proposin' to me to betray my own comrades."

"He'll keep," answered Shorty, with a sinister

shrug. "It's all only laid up for another day. But really, I sometimes think that there's no more sense in gittin' mad at such cattle as he is than there would be in gittin' wrathy at a fool steer or a wild animal. You git your mad up at a dog or horse, which has some sense, an' knows when he's mean an' vicious, but these brutes have no more gumption of right an' decency than baboons. I'm goin' to use him in my business."

"Well, you kin have him for all o' me. I don't want nothin' to do with him, except to kill him, an' I'd want to do that at tollable good range."

"I don't believe in this tunnel business, nohow," said Shorty, abruptly, for his mind had been turned in the direction of that means of escape by Tibbetts's talk. "There must be some better way o' gittin out o' there than by burrowin' in the ground like a wood-chuck. Seems stupid to me."

"So it does to me," returned Si. "There must be a hunderd better ways. I'd rather take my chances climbin' over the stockade. We might wait till some dark night, an' knock one or two o' them guards out o' their perches with clubs, set a pole agin the stockade, shin up it an' skip."

"I'm goin' to try them writs agin as soon as the sign seems right," said Shorty, "an' we'll all naturally walk out o' the gate, cool as cucumbers, toddle over to the woods an' then break for Sherman."

The newer prisoners all had this aversion to tunneling as a means of escape. For a certain time after a man entered the prison his mind ran on getting out by overpowering the guards in some way. Next he dwelt on some trick or strategem to get past

them. As he became weaker, day by day, he abandoned the thought of a physical contest with the sentinels, and the ill success of numerous cunning stratagems discouraged him. Then he began to think of tunnels, and as long as he had ambition and strength was incessantly planning and digging burrows in the ground. The difficulties of these were very great. The stockade was set firmly in the ground to the distance of four or five feet, the deadline compelled a beginning at least 20 feet from the timbers, and the tunnel would have to be continued for some distance beyond the stockade, to avoid coming up directly under the eyes of the guards. The rebels were constantly on the watch for tunnels; the guards were ordered to fire upon any one seen carrying dirt or digging at night, or any digging in the daytime that looked like tunneling. Spies were kept constantly inside the stockade on the lookout, and when anyone was caught tunneling, he was severely punished by the stocks, the chain-gang, or otherwise.

"I'm a little curious about these tunnels, all the same," said Shorty. "Let's take a little walk around this evenin' an' look 'em over—at least see what we kin find."

After dark the partners made their way across the creek an' up thru the crowded slope of the North Side to the place where Tibbetts had indicated.

They were not long in coming upon unmistakable signs of tunneling. Even thru the darkness they could detect little patches of freshly deposited sand, that had been carefully spread out by those who were carrying the dirt away. They came upon two

or three boys who were engaged in scattering out their bucketsful with their hands.

Next they ran against a boy staggering under a blanketful of sand. He was thin and weak; one of his ankles was stiffened with the scurvy, and the load taxed his utmost strength.

"Let us carry that for you, pardner," said Shorty, kindly. "You ought've gone twice for that load."

The boy looked at them with sharp suspicion. He did not like the look of Si's pine-tuft hat. He was probably a rebel spy. The sight of Shorty's bare head and feet seemed to reassure him, but then he thought it might be a scheme to get away with his precious blanket.

"Go along, an' tend to your own business," he said surlily, "and leave me to 'tend to mine. I ain't askin' none o' your help. I kin pack this myself."

He set his load down and breathed heavily.

"Come pardner," said Si, soothingly. "Don't git huffy, or be afraid of us. We're all right. We belong to the 200th Injianny Volunteers, Army o' the Cumberland, an' only come in a few days ago. We ain't lookin' for your tunnel, nor do we want your blanket. Here, Shorty, you take hold o' that end, an' I'll take hold o' this. Now, pardner, show us where you want this dumped, an' we'll take it there. You foller along close, an' you'll see that your blanket's all right."

Tears came into the boy's eyes.

"Yes, you're all right," he said, relinquishing his hold on the blanket. "I kin tell that by your voices. You're not rebels, an' you're not raiders. You talk like decent Western men. There's so many durned mean skunks, rebels and whites, loafin' around this camp, that one never knows who to trust."

"Well, you kin trust us every day in the week," said Shorty. "We don't purty much an' ain't great on style, but for honesty an' truthfulness we jest beat the devil. Where d' you want this stuff dumped?"

"There's an open space a little way ahead, to your left. I was a-goin' there. It hain't had none on it for a day or two."

"Here," complained a weak voice from inside the tent in front of the space; "are you fellers pilin' up more dirt out there? I told you not to. I can't git out o' my tent purty soon for the dirt. Besides, you'll have the guards shootin' in here an' killin' me."

"Don't mind him," said the boy. "He's dyin', an' he's only a citizen, anyway. He's a sutler's clerk."

That settled it. A "citizen" had not any right that need be carefully respected.

"Don't worry, pardner," Shorty assured the inmate of the tent, as he and Si got down on their knees and spread the sand out with their hands. "This'll only make the ground around your tent fresher and cleaner, and smother some o' the gray-backs that's swarmin' here. It'll help you."

The musket of the guard nearby suddenly roared out, and the heavy charge of buckshot tore up the ground behind them, but fortunately without hitting any of them.

"There! There! What'd I tell you?" complained the man inside. "You've drawed the fire o' the guard, just as I expected. Go away, or we'll all be killed."

"Guess that was meant for us," said Si, looking at the rift in the ground made by the buckshot.

"We'd better scatter. Say, pardner," he continued to the boy, as they drew off a little, "they're onto that tunnel o' yours. Better drop it for awhile, at least. We was talkin' to a rebel who was inside today, an' we know that they're watchin' you."

The boy sat down on the ground, his wan face a picture of abject despair.

"My God, what will we do?" he groaned. "We must finish the tunnel, an' git out. It is our last hope. It's our only hope. We'll all die in a week if we don't."

"Take us to your tunnel an' let's see it," said Si, pityingly.

The boy was so weak and his joints so stiffened by scurvy that Si had to almost lift him to his feet. With painfully halting steps he led them to a poor, rude shack against the dead-line. It had been constructed, when the prisoners first entered, by bending over poles like hoops and fastening their ends in the ground, and then wattling and thatching with pine-tufts. But the shack had not been looked after, and the thatching was falling into disrepair, with holes where the tufts had dried and fallen out.

"There was four boys in here," the boy explained, as Si and Shorty looked over the wretched habitation. "Captured at Mine Run and among the first prisoners that came in. They all died but one. We traded him all our blankets and clothes for this house, except this blanket. He laid out on the sand and traded them for grub, until they took him to the hospital. Me and my partners was taken at Ringgold, before the campaign really began. We've bin in here nearly two months now, an' have got the scurvy awful bad. We must git out o' here right away, or

we'll die. There's one o' my pardners settin' there. Look at him and see the condition he's in."

They looked and saw a tall boy, clad only in a ragged shirt and pair of drawers. The latter came scarcely below his knees. His skin clung to his bones everywhere, except his lower extremities, which were swollen and livid from an advanced stage of the scurvy. With his bony hands he was reaching inside to catch and bring out the dirt dug by another comrade working in the tunnel. He stopped and looked up at them with great eyes, full of the inexpressible pathos seen in those whose lives were rapidly sinking under the fatal scorbutic corruption.

"That boy," whispered the first boy to them, "is the son of the Judge in our place. My other pardner, the one who's inside diggin', is the son of a widow, whose husband was Presidin' Elder of our circuit. If he dies it'll kill her the minute she hears of it."

"Tell your pardner to come out, an' let us see how much of a tunnel you've got," said Si.

"Come out, Scott," called the first boy, and another emaciated boy in the advanced stages of the scurvy, crawled slowly out of the hole and gazed with feverish, flashing eyes on the newcomers. He held in his hand the half-canteen with which he had been digging.

"What's the matter, Hank? What did you stop me for?" he inquired impatiently. "I was getting along fine. I've dug more tonight than any so far. I'll have the hole ready to break in a day or two. Talk quick, and let me get back to work."

"These are friends from the Army o' the Cumber-

land," said Hank, the first boy. "They want to see what we're doing. Mebbe they can help."

"Well, hurry up and look at it, and let me get back to work. I may get thru tonight yet. Hank, let them help you and Nat carry off dirt. I can dig faster'n you can get the sand away. Hurry up."

He waved his half-canteen impatiently, and there was the accent of delirium in his quick, excited words. Shorty feared that the guard would overhear him.

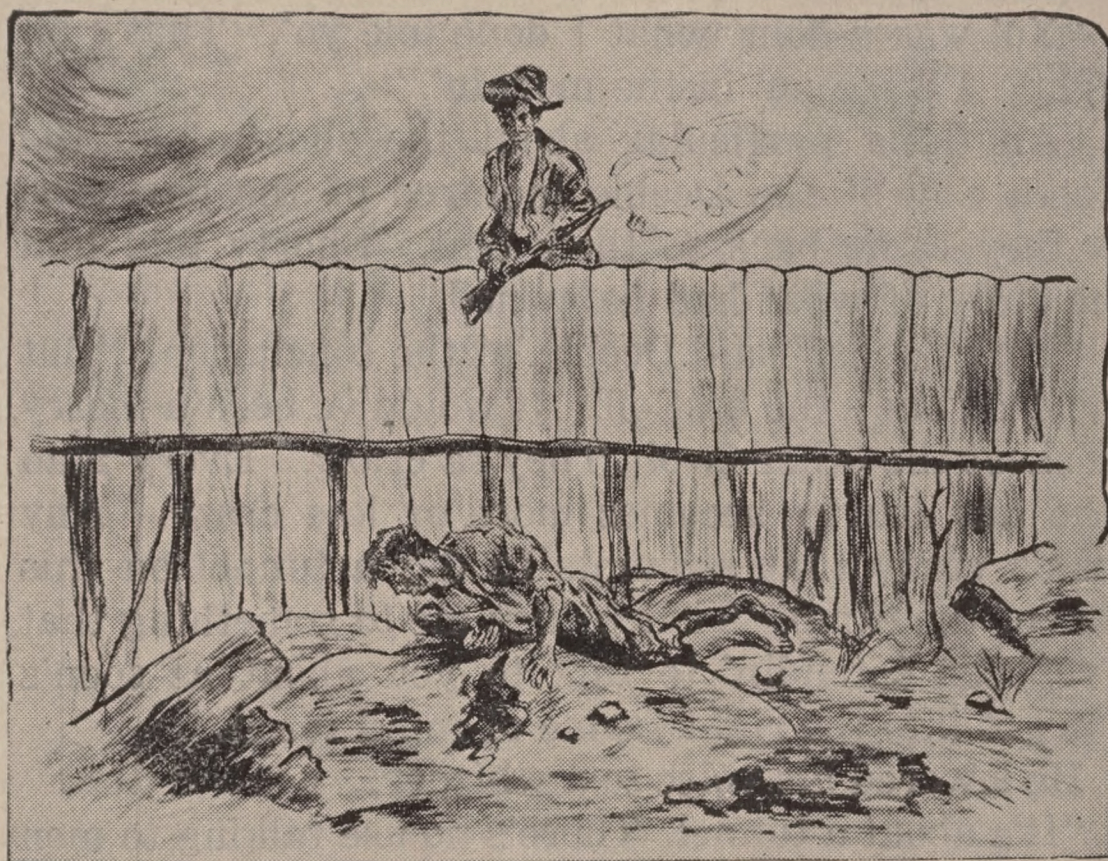
Si carefully examined the tunnel. It was only a small hole, but a foot or two under ground, and would squarely encounter the lower part of the stockade, if pushed that far, which it was improbable that the workers would be able to do, as all the labor they had devoted to it had not pushed it out the full length of a man beyond the dead-line. It was a hopeless task from the outset, for weakness, possibly death, must overpower them all before they had carried the tunnel more than half-way to the stockade. Si thought it his duty to impress upon them how little hope they had for success.

"Boys," said he earnestly, "you'll have to stop, an' right now. There's absolutely no chance for you. If you pushed your tunnel ahead you would only run up agin the bottom o' the stockade. But if you got out none o' you could go a mile. Then, you'd come out right in the midst o' the rebels, anyhow, an' they'd shoot you down as soon's you'd come out. Worst o' all, the rebels are already on to your tunnel. They're liable to jump you any minute, an' bust it an' put you in the stocks. Hist, there they come now."

The moon had come up brightly in the meanwhile,

and was flooding everything with light. Shorty's keen eyes had detected Tibbetts's evil face approaching in the little distance thru the crowd, and had given Si one of the secret signals the boys had used in camp.

Tibbetts made a rush on them, at the head of five or six armed guards.



THE GUARD FIRED INSTANTLY.

"I might as well die at once an' be done with it," shrieked Scott Wyman, making a frenzied leap thru the frail shack and over the dead-line. The guard had apparently been warned to be on the sharp lookout. He fired instantly, and tore a gaping hole thru the boy's breast.

"Blast yo' Yanks, I done cotched yo' at hit,"

shouted Tibbetts, as he grabbed the two other boys, hurried them backward to his guards, and began stamping down in the tunnel, and destroying the shack. "Take 'em out an' put 'em in the stocks," he ordered the guards. "I'll be out thar d'reckly, an' 'tend ter they'uns. That other feller got jist what he desarved, but a leetle ahead o' time."

Turning to Shorty, he said:

"Yo' was a-doin' what I done tole yo'. That's all right. I'll see yo' in the mornin'."

"Anything particular about the shootin' on the North Side?" Ike Deeble inquired of the partners, as they came back to their tent. Shorty told him the story of what had happened.

"Poor devils," said Deeble, at the conclusion. "But the dead one's the best off. It would've been a mercy to shoot the other two. They're crazy. Every man who has scurvy becomes more or less crazy. Any man's crazy that attempts to dig a tunnel on this side of the camp. That brings me to something that I've been intendin' to talk to you about as soon's you got into the right frame of mind for it."

He lowered his voice to a whisper.

"It's about a tunnel. There's no use talking to men when they first come in about tunnels, but I think you've got down to 'em now."

"We're ready for anything that you propose," said Si.

"Well," answered Ike Deeble. "I've got a big interest in the best tunnel that's been planned yet, an' one that's certain to go thru. It's the only one in the whole lot that is."

That was another peculiarity of the prisoners.

Everyone believed in his own tunnel, and had small faith in anybody else's.

"There's a heap o' hard work about it," continued Ike, "an' we need help from the rest o' the boys about it, an' we're all agreed to take you in."

"Is it a big enough job for our whole squad?" asked Si.

"Plenty. It's big enough for a hundred men, if we dared let so many in. Fifteen of us have been working it so far, all boys that we know and are sure of. You can trust everyone of your squad, can't you?"

"To the last hair o' their heads," said Si earnestly.

"Very well, then. I'll take you tomorrow."

"Agreed," said Si and Shorty, shaking hands over the compact.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BOYS BEGIN WORK ON THE TUNNEL.

WHEN Sergt. Tibbetts came in the next morning, Si could not conceal his feelings sufficiently to speak to or even meet him. The tragedy of the night before was too fresh, and he could only see in the rebel the embodiment of all that was hateful in wanton cruelty and murder. The look in those poor boys' eyes was too well-remembered, and the shriek of the one who was shot. Therefore, as soon as he saw Tibbetts approaching he turned and walked away from the tent, and occupied his eyes and thoughts with other things. There was more craft and guile in Shorty's nature. He was going to make use of Tibbetts until the day came when he could have a full reckoning with him.

"When I'm rung into a game where I hain't no show," he often explained to Si, "I pass or play low, until I kin git the cards into my own hands, when I perseed to make the other fellers mighty sick."

Shorty, therefore, met Tibbetts as if nothing noteworthy had occurred the night before, and inquired:

"Hello, how are you? Did you try that conjure?"

"Yes, indeedy. Jist as soon's I could. Had a powerful sight o' trouble a-findin' some soap, though. Thar warn't a mite anywhar in our camps. At last I done found some over in the camps o' the fust

rijimint. A teamster was a-totin' a gourd along fer hoss-medicine. I done used hit edzackly as yo' done tole me. Hit hurt like everything"——

"I kin understand," said Shorty. "I should think that good wash'd be the next thing to skinnin' you."



"BUT SEE HOW FUNNY HIT MADE MY HANDS LOOK."

"But I done kept at hit, jist as yo' done tole me. But see how funny hit made my hands look. I don't know they'uns, an' they'uns feel as funny as they'uns look."

"Yes, soap an' water have that effect when used for the first time in your life. But you'll git used to it in time. But your fingers feel more spry and limber than they did, don't they?"

"Yes, a hull lot."

"That's the work o' the conjure. Now, git some o' that dirt out from under your nails. They look like you might have to take a mattock an' shovel to the work. Then pare them nails till they look a little less like dog's claws, an' you'll be in shape to begin. Did you bring your cards with you?"

"Yes," said Tibbetts, producing a very greasy pack.

"If you'd bile these up with some lye, you'd git a good jag o' soap out o' them," said he, handling them gingerly. "They're about 10 miles the dirtiest cards I ever seen. We throw away cards after they git an inch or so o' dirt on 'em."

"We'uns kain't afford ter throw away keards as long 's they'll hold together," said Tibbetts. "That's the only deck in my company, an' a man brung 'em home last Fall from Chickamaugy. He done found 'em on a dead Yank."

"Should think that the man was not only dead, but badly mortified. Anyway, they're all the easier for our use, for they're marked so that a blind man kin read the backs as well as the faces. That's what you've got to learn. See here: This ace's got the upper left-hand corner tore off. See? That's the ace o' hearts. Now, let's find the other aces. Why, they're all marked the same way. Never noticed that before, did you? Well, you are a smart Aleck. No wonder they stole your eyes right out o' your head. Wonder if you'd notice a six-mule team if it was druv right across the board in front o' you?"

Thus Tibbetts's education went on. In a couple of hours Shorty got him so that he could recognize the most of the higher cards by their backs, and then stopped the lesson, fearing that Tibbetts might get

inflammation of the brain from too much sudden exercise of that dormant organ. He warned him to give no hint to Wad Greene of his increase in knowledge, but catch him unawares. Jeff Tibbetts went out cursing his own stupidity in not having seen the marks before, and gloating over what he was going to do to Wad Greene.

"I've been waiting for that rebel sucker to get away," said Ike Deeble, coming up to Shorty, and motioning to Si to draw near.

"This is Shad Graham, of my regiment," he said with a motion of his hand toward a very tall, slender, round-shouldered young man, two or three years older than Shorty. "He's the engineer and boss of the tunnel I told you about, an' he's come up here to talk to you about it."

Shorty and Si looked at the man, and were not favorably impressed. His long hair was lank and straw-colored; his attitude meek and shambling, and his eyes appeared dull and listless. He put out his hand bashfully, to take theirs, and said mildly:

"Yes, Sergt. Deeble insisted that I come up and see you for myself, though I'm always willing to take his judgment for anything. Sergt. Deeble knows men much better than I do."

"O, come off, Shad," said Deeble impatiently.

"Where's the rest of your squad? Sergt. Deeble said there were eight of you, I believe," inquired Shad, in soft, indecisive voice.

"Here they are," said Si, pointing out the boys, and naming them, one after another.

Apparently Shad hardly more than glanced at each one, but he said quietly:

"They're all right. They'll do."

"What sort of a milk-and-water maverick is that, Ike?" asked Shorty in an aside. "He don't seem to have spirit or strength enough to pull a setting hen off her nest."

"Humph, there's where you're left. That's the smartest man in this camp, bar none. He was a school teacher at home, to make his living, and Deputy Sheriff because he liked excitement, and always was dangerous. He's the quickest and best shot in our regiment, and got a Lieutenantcy by capturing a flag at Mission Ridge."

"If he's a Lootenant, what's he doin' in here?"

"O, he wanted to stay right with the boys, when we were captured. He snatched off his shoulder-straps and gave his name as a private. Say, don't you make any mistake. He looks slow, but you'll have to travel mighty fast, and go a long ways if you keep up with him."

"You'll know me as No. 1," said Graham, to Si. "Whenever we're around the tunnel always speak to me and of me that way. Sergt. Deeble is No. 2. There are 15 of us, so you'll be No. 16. We'll put your partner in the middle of your squad and call him No. 20. Some time during the day give the other numbers to the rest of your boys. Be very careful about it. Tell each boy separately, and don't let anybody hear you. You and your partner come along with me, and I'll show you where the tunnel is, and give you some points about the work. Don't walk along with me. We can't be too careful. This camp's full of spies, and maybe we've all been noticed talking together. I'll start first, and saunter slowly down in that direction. You start another way, and

make a circuit, keeping me in sight. Let your partner do the same with you."

Threading the narrow, tortuous paths that wound around the innumerable little shacks and burrows crowding the central part of the prison, avoiding as much as possible the harrowing sights that met his



SI AND SHORTY TALK TO IKE DEEBLE.

eyes everywhere, but stopping from time to time to give some poor helpless fellow a drink of water, or turn him into a more comfortable position, Si at last arrived at the most miserable and loathsome part of the prison. It was where the creek passed thru the stockade, at the eastern side. There were the

sinks. The stench was intolerable; flies and maggots swarmed as they did when the plagues descended upon Egypt, and only those poor fellows stayed there who had not courage and strength to battle for and maintain a place in the better sections.

In the south bank a deep cut had been made in the coarse white sand, for the purpose of getting earth to fill in toward the creek. The sides of the excavation were steep and the white, glaring walls seemed to concentrate in the wide pit not only the awful heat of the sun, but the vermin and the terrific stench.

The band of devoted Christian workers among the prisoners, who, though sick and in sore straits themselves, yet filled their days with laborious ministrations to those who were still worse off, were hard at work among the wretched unfortunates. Many were almost sinking under the burning heat, yet they were carrying water for the helpless men to drink, washing the faces and hands of others, and cleansing the hair and garments of still others from the torturing vermin. Some were singing and praying beside those who were dying. And among these Si and Shorty found Shad Graham leading in the singing of "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," in a fine, well-trained tenor voice. He greeted them with an almost imperceptible movement of his eyes, and by a turn of his hand pointing with his thumb toward a structure on the east side of the excavation.

The cut on that side was seven or eight feet deep, and left a bank about 10 feet wide intervening between it and the dead-line on that side of the stockade. Si and Shorty instantly saw its possibilities as

the beginning of a tunnel, if the work could be carried on without detection.

There were a number of more or less insufficient shacks and shelters around the excavation. They were generally blankets or pieces of shelter-tents stretched on sticks. In some the inmates lay directly on the hot sand. Others had dug down a little ways, as if to find a cooler bed than the radiating surface. Some had even gone so far as to build walls around, of sundried bricks, rudely shaped by the hands. These gave a little more coolness, kept out the drifting sand, and possibly some of the pestiferous vermin.

"Number One's significant thumb had indicated a shack that stood directly against the east bank, and this Si and Shorty examined with furtive glances from time to time, warily keeping from showing any special interest in it. It was clearly of better construction than any of the others; several fairly good blankets had been used in it, and it was firmly upheld by stout sticks thrust deeply into the ground. The side of the cut formed the rear wall, the two sides had been built up a couple of feet with sun-dried bricks, and the front was narrowed by the same means to a door. Three men lay inside on a blanket, with their legs drawn up as if by scurvy, but Si noticed that the place looked better kept than was usual in the tents of men so afflicted.

Then his attention was diverted by the cessation of the praying over the dying man, and hearing some one of the group around him say:

"Our brother is gone. He is at peace, at last, with Jesus. Let us take his body up to the gate."

"Does anybody around here know this man's name, company and regiment?" Shad Graham inquired, producing a strip of paper torn from a diary in his bosom, and a stubby lead pencil, while the others folded the dead man's hands across his breast, tied his great toes together, and tried to close his eyes and mouth as the body stiffened.

There was no answer. Graham repeated the question.

"No; nobody knows anything about him," said one. "Only that he belonged to Sheridan's Cavalry. He was taken all by himself, when he was carrying dispatches, and none of his regiment was with him."

"Feel in his pockets and see if there's anything to tell who he was."

They did so, and found nothing but a brier-wood pipe, a bit of tobacco, and the ambrotype of a pretty country girl.

"Cavalryman—unknown," wrote Graham on the slip of paper they pinned upon the breast.

"Nos. 13, 14, and 15 are in that tent," said Graham, without turning his head, as he passed Si. "Go up and speak to them, calling them by number. I'm going out with this body, and'll be at your tent when I come in." He went off and Si, strolling around, and looking at the other tents, and their inmates, finally came to the one he started for, and looked in.

"Hello, Nos. 13, 14, and 15," he said in a low voice. "How are you? Want anything?"

"Three pair of not-at-all sick eyes turned toward him, with some trouble in their expression at the strange face and voice.

"I'm all right," said Si, interpreting the look.

"I'm a new one, jest jined. No. 1 told me to ask you if you wanted anything?"

"I was in hopes you were the relief. We're nearly dead, laying here with our legs drawed up, and the flies and maggots chawing great chunks out of us. I declare, I believe they've bit off and carried away five pounds from me this morning, and I hain't any meat to spare. Talk about resting here. I'd rather dig all night, than lay here two hours. You ain't the relief? No? Well, then, for goodness's sake, take that can there and go up on the hill to one of the wells and get us some fresh water. You'll find a good well up there by those two pines. If they grumble about letting you have the water, tell 'em it's for one o' old Phil Kearny's boys."

Si took the tin, which was apparently an old can for ground coffee, and threaded his way thru the shacks in the direction of the pines. Presently he came to a well dug down 25 or 30 feet thru the sand and clay. At the top the sand was held back by some split boards, but below the clay was firm enough to retain its shape. He noticed that all the men in the tents around it wore the red diamond of the First Division of the Third Corps.

"Here," they said, noticing his can, "you can't git no water here. Go to your own well."

"I don't want it for myself," he answered. "A poor sick boy of Kearny's old division down there asked me to come up an' git him some fresh, cool water."

"Certainly, they said, springing up and looking around for the bucket with which they drew the water up. "He kin have all the water he wants. Are you one of Phil Kearny's old division?"

"No; I'm one o' Pap Thomas's boys. Was with him more'n two years."

"Well, that's the next best thing," they answered, as they adjusted the string, and lowered the bucket. "We've all heard of old Pap Thomas. He's nearly as good a fighter as one-armed Phil. Where was you taken?"

"Kenesaw Mountain."

"That was an old he-fight, and you come near busting the rebels, but Sherman got a very black eye at last. Here, hold out your can. You kin have all the water you want. We've got to take care of our well. There ain't a great deal in it, and if we let everybody run to it there wouldn't be any left for ourselves, and besides, they'd cave in the sides and choke it up. But come at any time you want to. You're welcome. Let me draw up another bucket for a drink for yourself."

"Thankee," said Si, wiping his mouth after filling himself with the sweet, cool draft.

He carried the water back to the boys and learned from them in a few words that having been engaged in digging and carrying away the latter part of the night before, they had to lie in the tents and rest, pretending to be very ill, to keep out curious visitors, until they were relieved by another detail who kept the place until those who were to work that night came on.

Si and Shorty returned to their own tent, and later in the day Shad Graham came to them. After some few words, said:

"As my boys are pretty well worn out, I'm going to put you, No. 16, to work tonight. You'll take Nos. 17 and 18 with you. I'll be there, and have No. 3 with

me to show you and help you the first night. After this, I'll expect you to run a shift of five men yourself. Probably you'd better try to only work till midnight, and then be relieved by Sergt. Deeble—No. 2—and your partner—No. 20—and three others, who'll work till morning, or until the moon gets up so as to make it dangerous."

"No; I'll try to keep it up all night," said Si. "That'll be better than wakin' up the boys at midnight."

"Very well then. As soon's it's good and dark, come down one at a time. You'll find me sitting on the bank near where the cut begins, just where you turn to go into it, on the east side."

Si designated Monty Scruggs as No. 17; Gid Mackall as No. 18, and Harry Joslyn as No. 19. Shorty bestowed No. 21 upon Alf Russell; No. 22 upon Sandy Baker, and No. 23 upon Pete Skidmore. The youngsters were all keen to go to work, and Shorty's squad felt that they were discriminated against by having their participation deferred for another night. It was still harder to obey Si's injunctions not to say a word even to one another about the enterprise.

As dusk deepened into darkness, Si arose and walked down to the ration-place on the South Side, followed at a little distance by Monty, Gid and Harry. He sauntered along as if going to join the crowd hanging around the gate, and then seemed to change his mind, and start down the slope across the creek. Then he turned squarely to the right, and began making his way southeast, thru the crowded tents, toward the other side of the prison. It was slow traveling and difficult following, but by the

time he reached the neighborhood of the dead-line on the east side the eager boys were close behind him. He turned to the left again and walked down toward the creek. The tents thinned out as he approached the squalid place, but he had to be careful to keep from stepping on the helpless men lying there. At the edge of the excavation he saw a figure seated.

"No. 16?" said a low voice.

"Yes, No. 1," answered Si; "an' here's Nos. 17, 18, an' 19."

"Very good. You're prompt. No. 16, follow me, at a little distance. The rest of you deploy out a little more, and follow us. When you see us go into the tent, halt and wait till your numbers are called. Then come in."

He walked down and around to the tent which he entered, and a minute later another man came out. He called in a low tone as he passed:

"No. 17."

Monty Scruggs walked up to the tent and entered.

"Squat down," said Shad Graham. "No. 9, you go now. Call No. 18 as you pass."

A moment later Gid entered and squatted down.

"You go, now, No. 10," said Shad, and call No. 19."

Harry Joslyn came in, and No. 11 was dismissed.

"Let's get this blanket up, boys," said Graham. "Now, the mouth of the tunnel is right here, covered by this wooden tray, filled with sand. Feel around there by your knees, No. 16, and you'll find the edge. Catch hold of it and lift it up, same time as I do this side. There you are!"

When the tray was lifted up and out, Si was conscious of a hole in the ground, which it had con-

cealed. He saw thru the plan at once. When quitting work the entrance to the tunnel had been covered with the tray of plank, filled with sand. The sand on either side had been smoothed down to conceal the edges, and then a blanket spread over, upon which apparently very sick men lay during the day.

"Here is the mouth of the tunnel," said Graham, taking Si's hand and placing it on a stick of wood, which supported the ground, at the entrance, and was a little lower than the tent floor. Here is a half-canteen and a case-knife, with which we dig. We always keep them here. Here are two drawers legs in which we carry out the dirt. Nos. 18 and 19, you each take one. You fill them up with dirt, and walk over to the edge of the creek, untie the lower end, and let the dirt dribble into the water. Be careful to carry them close to you in such a way as to not to attract the attention of any one wandering around, for there are lots of spies in here every night, and you don't want even the men around here to notice that there is anything going on at this tent more than occasional men coming in and going out. When you get to the creek let the dirt run out quietly and slowly into the water, so that it will wash along, and make no sign, as it would if emptied on the ground anywhere. Be mighty careful, too, not to make a splash, which will attract the attention of the guard, and draw his fire on you. Each of you try to go a different way when you leave the tent, every time, so as to make it look as if you were going from some of the other tents. Nos. 8 and 19, do you thoroughly understand?"

"We do," answered Monty and Gid.

"I'll go into the tunnel and dig as long as I can,"

continued Graham. "It'll not be a great while, for we've struck hard clay, and it's tough work. I'll throw the dirt under me, and work it back with my feet to No. 16, who'll scrape it back with his hands under him, and then work it with his feet to No. 17, who'll pull it out of the mouth of the tunnel, and put it in the bags for Nos. 18 and 19. When I get tired, we'll all back out, No. 16 will take my place digging, and No. 17 his place, and I'll take No. 19's place carrying away. Now, you all understand, and the less we say hereafter the better. Everybody wants to keep quiet and work, and do everything to avoid attracting attention."

He picked up the half-canteen and knife in his left hand, and used his right to propel himself into the hole, whither he was followed by Si and then by Monty.

CHAPTER XVIII

AN UNEXPECTED MISHAP TO THE TUNNEL.

IT seemed actually stifling in the hole into which Si had followed Shad Graham. There was small breathing room there for a man who had always felt that a Township was none too big to furnish him with fresh air. Then, the stench outside, which seemed overpowering, appeared to be concentrated in the tunnel. Si gasped as he entered, but Graham pulled sturdily forward, and Si followed him.

The hole was but very little wider than Si's broad shoulders, so that his arms were cramped in their action.

"I'm afraid you'll have trouble in getting along," Graham said. "This hole wasn't built for men who have as much meat on 'em as you have. Here, take this half-canteen. You can scrape some off the sides here and there, and give you more room. I won't need it, anyway. I've struck some hardpan, where it'll be of no use. I'll have to cut out chunks with the knife."

As near as Si could judge, the tunnel started low enough to pass under the stockade, and had been pushed forward about 15 feet or more. This would take them a foot or two under the 20-foot of space between the dead-line and the stockade, and was, therefore, less than half-done, for they would have

to go quite as far beyond the stockade on the outside, in order to come up at some distance from the guard, and hope to escape his observation.

Si was surprised at the energy with which Shad Graham attacked the hard clay with his inefficient tool. He stabbed into the earth with his knife, and pulled and pried until he had dislodged clods, which he rolled back under him to Si, who passed them on, with handfuls of dirt, to Monty, who in turn passed them out to the boys. They broke them up into smaller pieces, to make no splash in the water, and be readily dissolved by it, and stuffed the dirt into the drawers legs.

As one of the guards was perched at one side where the creek issued from the stockade, another at the other side, and one directly over the course of the tunnel, the greatest care was enjoined upon the boys in carrying out and emptying the dirt. No trail must be left leading to the tent, for the rebels inspected the ground every day for signs of digging, and any trace of the red clay thru which they were now digging would be a dead giveaway. They must dribble it along in the water of the creek so that it would be scattered and carried some distance, and not be noticeable. They must do this in such a way as not to attract the notice of the guard, who would not only shoot but alarm the camp, and bring about a discovery of their work. To instruct Harry and Gid in this had been No. 3's duty, and he carefully taught them to carry their burdens as if they were the little bags of meal which the prisoners sometimes carried, and to wade into the creek at different places, and as they emptied the dirt, scatter it with their feet, to make it less noticeable. The boys were a little ner-

vous about the guards at first, as they had to start out under the very eyes of the one over the tunnel, and do their work in the face of those on both sides of the creek. They would start at every noise from the guard-perches. Presently they got used to this, however, and over the feeling that every time the guard changed the position of his musket he was raising it to shoot at them.

Si was tired almost to faintness in pulling out the dirt, before Shad Graham showed any weariness in digging. Then Graham remarked:

"There, I'll have to come out and rest a little, I think I've dug six inches, and shaped it up well on the sides. Crab back, boys, and let me out."

They all backed into the tent, and presently Graham emerged, his face covered with perspiration, and his hands muddy from the clay having mixed with the sweat.

"Goodness," he gasped, "that clay's as tough as whitleather. It's the worst I've struck yet. And the old knife's getting duller every minute. Now, No. 16, when you go in, be very careful to dig the same with both hands. Dig just exactly as much with your left hand as you do with your right, to keep the hole heading straight for the stockade. If you don't, you'll make a curve to the left. That's the mistake that all men make when they begin digging tunnels, and the first thing they know they have them shaped like a horseshoe."

"I understand," said Si, a new idea striking him.

"Don't be discouraged by the slow headway you make," continued Graham. "A little at a time goes far in a day. Don't be ambitious and try to dig too much the first time. You'll break yourself down.

You faint in the hole and give us no end of trouble getting you out. If you dig an inch or so, or even just learn how to dig, it'll be all that you can do, or ought to do, the first trial. Now, remember to stop and crab back just as soon's you begin to feel tired."

Si outwardly acquiesced, but inwardly resolved that he would dig possibly several feet before he stopped.

Graham dismissed No. 3, and took Gid Mackall's place in carrying off, while Si, grasping the knife, crawled into the hole, followed by Monty and Harry, Gid remaining at the mouth.

The air grew still heavier and more mephitic as Si crawled in, until it seemed as if he could not breathe. But he attacked the clay energetically with his knife. In spite of the simplicity of the task, he had never attempted anything so difficult before in his life. His head swam, the utter darkness confused him, feel of the ground was utterly strange and unnatural, the narrow sides of the tunnel cramped his arms and misdirected his blows. He could not make a natural motion, and only jabbed feebly and vainly at the clay beyond his head. This baffling helped to excite him, he was speedily bathed in perspiration, and in a few minutes so weak that he had to stop and rest. He then felt over the face of the cut carefully; began to recognize its nature, and the way to go to work. But he did not make an inch of real progress, nor get out enough dirt to fill one of the bags, before he saw that it was wise to follow Graham's injunctions, and back out for a rest.

In view of his experience, Si laid down positive injunctions to Monty that he must not remain more than five minutes in the hole, or sufficiently long to

get acquainted with the work. Then, if he did not come out, Harry was to catch hold of his foot and pull him out, while Gid did the same to Harry, and Si would pull the whole string.

Being much smaller than Si, Monty, also less affected by the vitiated air, was able to do quite a little digging before the relentless grip of Harry on his ankle haled him back. Then he clasped his hands on the ground in front of him, and triumphantly brought with him quite a pile of dirt, to show the progress that he had made. It was the same with Harry and Gid, and when Graham went in again for inspection, he was gratified to find that nearly a foot of progress had been made during the evening. He did little more while he was inside than shape up the sides, and assure himself that the course of the tunnel was being kept straight, for now the moon was rising rapidly, and work would have to be abandoned.

As the light became stronger, Graham, bent and hobbling as if suffering from scurvy, went around and examined carefully to see that no trail of red clay had been left to hint at their work. Not a stray clod escaped his sharp eyes. He pressed it into the earth with his foot, and drew a covering of sand over it.

He returned to the tent presently, and ordered:

"Put the cover back and draw sand over it. Now spread the blanket down again. No. 16, go to your quarters. Nos. 17, 18, and 19, lie down on the blanket and go to sleep. When you wake up in the morning, draw up your legs and pretend to have the scurvy awful bad, to anybody that looks in. Keep your ears open to everything going on about the tent, though. If anybody tries to take anything away,

reach up for that club you'll find just above your heads, jump up and make him get out. Don't more than one of you go out at a time, though, unless you have to. Don't talk any more than you're actually obliged to. You'll stay here until Nos. 4, 5, and 6 come down here to relieve you, after their roll call, and then you'll have time to go up to your own roll call."

In his desire to take the bulk of the disagreeable work on himself, Si had wanted to take the trick of remaining in the tent, but No. 1's orders were not to be discussed, and Si sauntered back home, taking occasional studies of all the approaches to the tunnel, and calculating the probabilities. He grew quite hopeful. The plan was excellent, and under Graham's rigid discipline had every promise of success. All this he communicated to the expectant Shorty, who was eager to begin his share of the work.

He was also disturbed on the food and money question.

"What are we goin' to do about them boys, Si, if we don't git out soon? They're bracin' up splendid, an' purtendin' they're all right, but I can see that they're gittin' peakeder an' peakeder every day—especially Pete. An' Sandy Baker ain't a fut behind. Then, our money's runnin' low. We've bin careful an' only spent a little every day to git some little thing to help out the boys' rations, but now we're gittin' near the end o' our bank account, an' I don't know where more's to come from unless Providence helps agin with a dumb old 'Squire who's jest sold a nigger, which ain't likely."

Si could give no consolation.

Monty Scruggs ransacked his elocutionary work-

basket in vain for some selection that would do justice to the plague of vile creeping things that attacked him and his companions as they were lying there, while the sun climbed up in all his fierce strength, and the interior of the prison seethed under



“I CAN SEE 'EM GETTIN' PEAKEDER AN' PEAKEDER
EVERY DAY.”

the burning heat. After exhausting all his boyish expletive, he remarked:

“Boys, the worst thing that I want done to Jeff Davis, after we bust the rebellion, is to make him a prisoner a year right here in this tent, without being allowed to move or stir. If that don't make him repent of his treason, nothing ever will.”

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 002 179 991 9